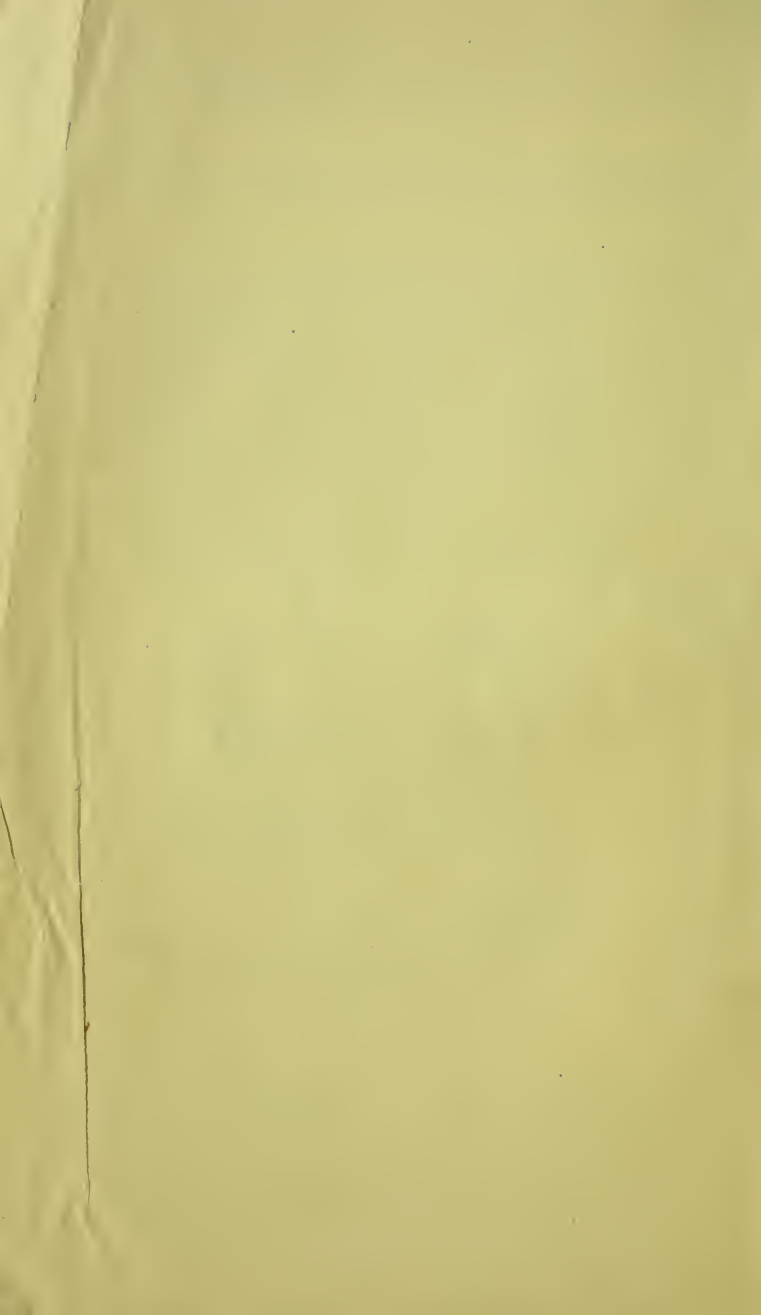


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The Arrival. p. 16.

IRISH ARMY.



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P R E F A C E.

IN the course of a somewhat extended acquaintance with the lives, habits and sufferings of street-children—those who go about begging cold victuals, collecting fire-wood and gathering rags—the author's attention has been earnestly directed to finding some way of benefiting these wretched little sufferers. They are born in the most miserable haunts of vice and poverty; and made the slaves of their idle and worthless parents, who, for the most part, live at home in perfect indolence, subsisting on the fruits of their children's begging expeditions.

When these children are taken from under the influence of their parents, and placed in situations of comparative comfort, they are, if managed judiciously, often found docile and obedient; and, almost

invariably, very intelligent and quick to learn. Of course, they are much more difficult to manage in a city, where they are exposed to the vicious influences under which they have grown up, than when taken into the country, where they are out of the reach of many temptations. Yet even in the city much may be done by kindness and patience.

Almost every farmer's family has a place for one of these unfortunates, either boy or girl, where he or she may be trained to good habits, and become a useful member of society. It is a work which, of course, requires patience, forbearance, and long-suffering; and it may sometimes happen that all the labour appears to be thrown away: but is it not an experiment worth trying?

We have been acquainted with at least three successful efforts of this kind, within a year and a half, in which the children might be regarded as of the most hopeless class. Two of them were taken into the country by kind and Christian people, and are now doing as well as their best friends could wish. The third still lives in the city, at a place where she is receiving good instructions from a kind

and judicious mistress, and where she is earning tolerably good wages. Many other like cases might be specified.

In the spring of 1853 the author assisted in teaching a sewing class of fourteen girls, from eight to fifteen years of age, taken indiscriminately from the streets. They met twice a week, and spent three hours in sewing upon materials provided for them, the exercises concluding with a reading lesson. Most of them had never taken a needle in hand before; and it was astonishing to see the improvement they made in the short space of three months, not only in their lessons, but also in manners and appearance. They soon learned to come with clean hands and faces and well-brushed hair, to open and shut a door gently, and to answer properly when spoken to, or when talking among themselves. Some inducement was of course necessary to bring them together in the first place, and they were allowed to take, as their own, all the materials they would make up. They were permitted to talk freely, as a means of getting at their ideas—and a strange chapter of human life it was! The author would suggest this means of doing good to any who,

reading this little book, should be led to ask,
“What can I do?”

It may be stated, in conclusion, that all the main, and many of the minor incidents of this talé are literally true, and have occurred under the author's own observation.

L. E. G.

IRISH AMY.

CHAPTER I.



T was a pleasant afternoon at the beginning of summer, and Mr. Ryan's shady and roomy house looked even pleasanter than usual. The locust trees were in blossom, and, with the lilacs, filled all the air with sweetness. Perhaps there never was a pleasanter farm-house than Mr. Ryan's. It was about two miles from the village, and stood some distance back from the road, on a little hill; so that when you stood at the front door or the upper windows, you could see the farmer's wagon, or Mrs. Ryan's rockaway, leaving or approaching the house when quite a long way off.

It was a large square two-story house, built of rather dark coloured stone, and had a piazza before and behind, over which grew roses,

honeysuckles, and the American ivy. On one side, under the parlour windows, was a flower-garden, not very large and not always very well attended, but full of all those dear old-fashioned flowers which we love when we are children, and love still more when we are grown up. There were sweet seringas and lilacs, great snowballs and tall hollyhocks, plenty of roses of all sorts, and other things more than I can tell you of. The vegetable garden was upon the other side of the house, not far from the kitchen door.

In the rear of the house the ground sloped somewhat suddenly down to the river, which was quite rapid, and flowed along for some distance in sight of the back windows. So much for the house.

Mr. and Mrs. Ryan were, as people say, very well off. Mr. Ryan had a large farm near his house, and another a few miles distant, both under excellent management and very productive; and he was considered a rich man by his neighbours. His wife, moreover, had quite a little property of her own, inherited from her father. They were middle-aged persons, and had one child, a daughter, who at the time I have in view was about sixteen. Mr. and Mrs.

Ryan, Elizabeth and her aunt, Miss Rachel Ward, made up the family.

They were not only rich in this world's goods, but they had also treasure in heaven. Mrs. Ryan was a woman who had only to know her duty in order to do it. She was a very quiet, gentle person, and seldom was her voice heard; but when she spoke, it was "once for all." She had lost several children, and had none now remaining but Lizzie, as she was usually called. On the afternoon when our story commences, Mrs. Ryan and Miss Ward were sitting out on the front piazza, one knitting and the other sewing. The windows were opened into the dining-room, where the table was set for tea; and Mrs. Ryan cast many glances along the highway, as if she were expecting some one.

"They are very late to-day," she remarked at last. "I wonder what keeps them so long!"

"They! Who?" inquired Miss Ward, absently.

"Your father and the little girl he was to bring with him," replied Mrs. Ryan.

Miss Ward laid her sewing down on her lap, and gazed at her sister with a countenance expressive of the most overwhelming aston-

ishment. "You don't mean to say," she exclaimed, "that you are going to take another of those street savages from the city into this house!"

Mrs. Ryan smiled.

"Well, if ever!" exclaimed Miss Rachel, still more vehemently than before.

"Why, Rachel, what is there so wonderful about that? I always said I should take another child if I could get one."

"Another child! Yes, but I thought you would try to get a decent one this time. There are the Clarkes: they would be glad enough to have you take one of theirs."

"The Clarke girls are well enough off now," answered Mrs. R. "They can support themselves decently, if they choose to work; and if they are sick, every one is ready to help them: and therefore I prefer to take some one who is more unfortunate. These poor miserable heathen—savages as you rightly call them—have very few ready to extend a helping hand to them. It seems to me to be a true missionary work, and I am not disposed to shrink from my part of it."

"Well, I must say," replied Miss Rachel, "that I don't feel any call to do such work."

I am as willing as any one to do missionary work, I am sure ; indeed, I had some thoughts at one time of going out on a mission myself. But that would be very different from taking into the house a ragged dirty child out of the street, who must be washed from head to foot to begin with, and continually watched that she does not steal, or do some other mischief. And, nine times out of ten, it does no sort of good. Look at Peggy Rice, what did it amount to in her case, except trouble ?”

“As to the work being so different,” replied Mrs. Ryan, “I imagine the chief difference is, that the home branch is much the easiest. It would not be quite so bad to have two or three girls like Peggy Rice under one’s charge, as to take a school of thirty or forty dirty, half-naked negroes of all ages, and teach them from morning till night,—to say nothing of leaving home and friends behind, and putting up with all imaginable inconveniences. Did you hear Priscilla Hyatt’s description of the cockroaches and scorpions upon their vessel, going to Maulmain ? I should think that alone was rather worse than any thing we had to bear from Peggy, especially to you who are so afraid of even a June bug. I thought of that while Priscilla was telling the

story. Think of finding a spider on your dress as large as a coffee cup !”

“That’s only one thing,” said aunt Rachel; “and, after all, there is something in the very name of going on a mission.”

“I admit that, if the name of the thing is what you care for.”

“Well, sister, you have a right to do as you please in your own house, of course. If you choose to take so much trouble, and expose Lizzie to such influences, it is your own concern. But don’t expect me to have any thing to do with it. It is as much as I can do to attend to my own affairs, without going out of my way for these miserable creatures, who are hardly worth saving, after all.”

Mrs. Ryan now laid down her work in her turn, and moved round so as to face her sister, whom she addressed in a clear voice, which was perhaps a little raised from its ordinary calm tones :—

“Do you think you are worth saving, Rachel? Do you suppose God looks with any more favour upon you, a sinner and a rebel against Him, because you live in a decent house and wear decent clothes? Who maketh thee to differ from another, or what hast thou that

thou didst not receive? Is it any merit on your part that you have had friends to take care of you ever since you were born, and any amount of pains taken to lead you in the right way? Rachel! Rachel! I am almost afraid you have never felt the love of God shed abroad in your own soul, or you would not be so hard-hearted toward those who have not been favoured as you have been. As for your missionary contributions, they cost you very little self-sacrifice, and no trouble; and your work for the sewing circle is more than repaid by the society you enjoy when there. I think you have the greatest reason to doubt your own state in religious matters; and I tremble for you lest One should say to you in that day, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.' "

Mrs. Ryan seldom reprov'd, but when she did her reproof was likely to be felt. There was that now in her tone and look which fairly awed Miss Ward into silence. She sat for a few moments without speaking, and then gathering up her working materials, she went into the house. Mrs. Ryan followed her, cast a glance at the abundantly furnished tea-table,

and passed into the kitchen to give some directions to Jane, the last of which was, "Be sure to have plenty of warm water."

The wagon soon after came up to the door, and Mrs. Ryan went to receive the new-comers. Mr. Ryan got out first, and then assisted a little girl to alight.

"This is the child," he said in a low voice to his wife. "She is a pretty looking object, isn't she?" said he aside.

"What is her name?" asked Mrs. Ryan.

"Amy Reilly," replied the farmer. Then raising his voice, he said to the girl: "Well, this is your new home. Amy! come and speak to this lady."

But Amy stood motionless. She was rather a pleasant-looking child, about eleven years old, but small for her age, and very thin. She was dressed in an old red calico frock, which came hardly to her knees, although it had been lengthened by the summary process of pulling out the hem, and leaving it out. She had shoes, but no stockings; and her bare legs were marked in all directions by bruises and scratches, while her long light hair had apparently been braided up two or three weeks ago, and not undone once since. Some attempt had

been made to render her presentable, however; for her face bore evident tokens of washing, and she wore an old faded cotton shawl, which partly concealed her rags. The poor child looked round with a scared and bewildered gaze, and as Mr. Ryan spoke to her, she burst into tears, and sobbed violently.

“Never mind now!” said Mrs. Ryan, soothingly. “She feels strange enough, no doubt, poor child! She shall go to Jane, and have some supper, and then she will feel better.”

So saying, Mrs. Ryan led her into the kitchen, and delivered her to the care of Jane—a decent coloured woman, who reigned supreme in those regions.

“Never mind that now, Jane,” she said, as that faithful creature lifted her hands in amazement. “Let us get her fed first, and then we will attend to the rest.”

“I did not bring her clothes,” said the farmer, as he handed one parcel after another from the depths of the wagon. “They were not altogether worth two shillings, and so dirty—is there a parcel of seeds there, wife?—that they were worse than none.”

“She can take those that Peggy Rice left,” said Mrs. Ryan; “they will about fit her.”

“So I supposed:—there are your ribband and things, and Lizzie’s books. You should see the hole they live in: father and mother, and this girl and two boys, all in a little place, not as big as your milk-room, and dirtier than any pig-pen of mine ever was, I hope.”

“How did you hear of her?” asked Mrs. Ryan, as they went in to tea.

“From Miss Fairbarn,” answered her husband. “She found them out in the course of her visitations, and became interested in the girl from some cause. I believe she had her in her sewing school. She says she is a bright child, and well disposed; but of course she does not know much about the way in which decent people live.”

“Has she parents?”

“Her father is dead, and her mother is married again. They both drink, and use up all they can earn in whisky. Meantime the children are sent out begging to supply the family with food. Miss Fairbarn told me that she has often seen this girl out in the coldest weather, no better clothed than she is now, and that, too, when she was so sick as to be unfit to be out of bed; and more than once

they have turned her out of doors, and kept her out all night."

"A nice family to take a child from, to be sure," said Miss Ward.

"Excellent," said Lizzie. "I never heard of a family that it seemed more desirable to take a child from. I should think the sooner she was taken from them the better."

Lizzie took a certain pleasure in annoying her aunt Rachel, for which she was often reproved and checked by her mother. Aunt Rachel often said she was the most provoking child in the world.

"I have no doubt I shall be able to get on with her, unless her people interfere," remarked Mrs. Ryan. "Of course, it will take some trouble, and require patience and forbearance. I never saw a child that did not require all this and more."

After tea, Mrs. Ryan and Jane set themselves to wash and comb the little stranger, now much comforted by a bowl of bread and milk. She was washed from head to foot; her hair cut short and carefully combed, and she was clothed anew in plain and decent garments.

"You don't look like the same child, Amy," said Jane, surveying her handiwork with great

satisfaction. "I suppose you never had on such a decent suit of clothes before, did you?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Amy, now smiling, and almost as much pleased as Jane. "Last fall I went to the Sunday-school two or three Sundays, and the ladies fixed me as nice as I am now, and gave me a nice straw bonnet."

"And what has become of them?"

"I wore them two or three times, and mother said I needn't go no more. It wasn't no use, she said. So she took the clothes, and sold them at Mrs. Rooney's, and I didn't go no more."

"What an awful critter!" exclaimed Jane. "Did you ever hear the like, to sell the very things her girl got at Sunday-school! What did she get for them?"

"She took them in whisky: Mrs. Rooney don't sell nothing else. There was a woman lived in the other part of the house, that used to send her girls to three different Sunday-schools, and they all gave her things, and by-and-by she took and sold them all. I was real sorry to leave off going, for the lady was very good to me."

"Why didn't you keep on?" asked Jane.

"I was ashamed to go, after mother had

sold my things," said Amy, hanging her head. "I used to go and listen at the door sometimes, but I didn't go in."

"Well, Amy, I hope your troubles are at an end now," said Mrs. Ryan. "If you are a good girl, and try to do as we wish, we shall always befriend you. I expect you will find it hard at first to be neat and quiet, and to learn to tell the truth and be industrious; but you must have a great deal of patience. Now you may go with Jane, and see her milk, if you like; but be sure and mind all she tells you."

"What did she mean by tell the truth, Jane?" asked Amy, after standing by her for some time in silence, watching the milk as it streamed into the pail.

"Why—not tell lies," answered Jane. "Tell things just as they happen. If I were to take your apron, and then say I hadn't seen it, that would be a lie. We must always tell things just as they are."

"When mother used to send me to get something of Miss Fairbarn, she used to bid me say she was sick, and hadn't nothing to eat. Was that a lie?"

"Yes, to be sure, child, if it was not so; but you must forget all those ways now. Mrs.

Ryan is a good woman, and will teach you all you want to know, and you must be careful and mind whatever she says."

"I will," said Amy. "I like it out here, it smells so sweet and looks so nice. Where I used to live it's all nothing but dirty houses, and smells so,—you can't think!"

"What do you make of your new pupil, mother?" asked Lizzie, when Mrs. Ryan returned to the parlour.

"I cannot tell much about her yet, of course," answered Mrs. Ryan. "She was dirty and hungry enough, and that is all I know of her. She seems to have some sense of decency, however, for she is evidently pleased with her new clothes. She has been to Sunday school a little, and says she likes it; but her mother sold her clothes, and then she was ashamed to go any more."

"I don't believe it," said aunt Rachel. "No mother would do such a thing."

"I think it is very likely to be true," said the farmer, who was reading his newspaper in the easy-chair by the back-parlour window. "You haven't much acquaintance with the ways of such people, Rachel."

“Peggy Rice told the same sort of story,” remarked Lizzie. “But I should think her teacher would have gone to see her, and brought her back to school again,—shouldn’t you, mother?”

“She ought to have done so, no doubt, and perhaps she did try. It is not so easy in the city for a young lady to penetrate into all the dens that her scholars come from. You cannot tell much about the places there are in a city by only going shopping or visiting.”

“That is true,” assented Lizzie; “and even in riding through, one sees some frightful sights. But do not Sunday-school teachers visit their children in the city?”

“Oh yes, a great deal,” said Mrs. Ryan. “Didn’t you hear Mrs. Fitch telling, the other night, at our society-meeting, about going to see her girls, and finding one of them pulling driftwood out of the river?”

“I was not listening,” said Miss Rachel. “I was trying to make out how the points were put round the neck of her dress. I mean to make mine so.”

“Is that the sort of missionary work you like, aunt Rachel?” asked Lizzie, mischievously.

“Hush, Lizzie, you should not speak so.”

“Oh pray let her talk,” said aunt Rachel, in an acid tone. “She don’t disturb me at all. I suppose she thinks herself very witty.”

“I do not know whether I shall get on with this girl,” remarked Mrs. Ryan, “but I have great hopes. I have sometimes thought that such neglected children are easier to manage than those who have had more pains taken with them. At any rate, one can but try. You think, Rachel, that my experiment with Peggy Rice was a failure; but you cannot tell how much good she may have carried away with her in spite of herself. The seed cast upon the waters may be found, and bear fruit yet; and the trial certainly did no one any harm. If we can contrive work enough to keep Amy busy, and watch her carefully, we shall soon learn something about her. Jane wants to go away and visit her friends next week; and then you and I, Lizzie, shall have to take charge of the work, and we can teach the child ourselves.”

Mrs. Ryan herself showed Amy where she was to sleep, and waited until she was ready to go to bed. Then she said: “Don’t you say your prayers, Amy?”

“Sometimes I did,” answered Amy. “The

lady at the Sunday-school taught me two prayers, but I 'most' forget one of them; the other begins: 'Now I lay me down to sleep.' "

"Whom do you speak to when you say your prayers?" asked Mrs. Ryan.

"God," answered the child, readily enough.

"Can God hear you?"

"Teacher said he could. She said he could see me too, but I never saw him. I can't remember all she told me, it was so long ago!"

Mrs. Ryan heard Amy say the prayer she remembered, and made her repeat the Lord's Prayer after her. She then left her, and Amy—though almost frightened by the clean sheets—got into bed, and was soon asleep.

Next morning, she was awakened early by the sun streaming into her window, and she heard Jane stirring in the next room. She could hardly remember where she was at first.

The little room was so clean and sweet, and her bed so nice and comfortable—so different from any thing she had ever seen before, that she felt as if she must be asleep and dreaming still. She got up, and went to the window. There lay before her, not the miserable alley which she had beheld every morning since she could remember, but broad fields, and woods,

and the bright river, with a range of high blue hills, as far away as she could see. The birds were singing in the trees round the house; and a huge rooster was exercising his voice in a series of sonorous crowings, which a little white bantam, perched upon the top rail of the fence, strove in vain to emulate. Amy knew nothing about beauty or the principles of taste, but she felt that here was something very different from all she had ever seen before; and she would have been perfectly satisfied to sit for half the day with her chin on the window-sill looking out.

“What are you looking at, Amy?” asked Jane, putting her head in at the door.

“At all the things,” replied Amy. “It’s so nice here!”

“I expect it does look nice to you,” said Jane. “I am so used to it, I don’t think much about it. But come, dress yourself, and come down-stairs. I want you to help me.”

Amy was soon dressed.

“Am I to wash me there?” she asked.

“To be sure, child. Always wash in the morning and at night, and whenever you get your hands and face dirty besides. Come, and I’ll show you the place.”

When Amy's dressing operations were concluded, Jane set her to making a fire, and then to wash and peel potatoes, taking care to watch her closely. Then she showed her where the dishes were, and instructed her about setting the table; in all which Amy showed herself sufficiently teachable, though she could not understand why any one should want so many dishes put on for breakfast. When the milk was brought in and strained, (an operation which Mrs. Ryan always performed herself,) she called Amy to help to put away the páns. Amy was strong and active, and lifted them easily enough; but as she raised the last pan, she spilled part of its contents on the table and the floor. She set it down hastily and looked terrified.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Ryan, gently. "It was an accident; but you must be more careful. Ask Jane for the mop and a cloth to wipe the table. No, no, not the table with the mop, —take the cloth for that: the mop is only for the floor. You will soon learn the way, if you take pains."

Amy looked as much surprised at not getting a slap, as many children would at receiving one; but she wiped the floor and table care-

fully, and put away the pans without any other mishap. The family now assembled at prayers, during which Amy was very quiet, though she hardly seemed to understand what was going on. When breakfast was put upon the table, Mrs. Ryan gave her a small waiter, and showed her how to hand the cups of coffee, &c.—a service which she accomplished with a tolerable degree of dexterity. When all had breakfasted, she helped Jane to wash the dishes and put them away. She thought it altogether surprising that Jane should rinse and drain them before wiping, and could not understand the necessity of taking a dry towel when the one she was using became damp; but she followed directions implicitly, and Jane professed herself altogether satisfied with her.

“Now, you may go into the dining-room and see if Mrs. Ryan is there,” said Jane. “She wanted you to come to her when you got through.”

Amy went accordingly, and found Mrs. Ryan seated at her sewing.

“Come here and sit down, Amy,” said she. “I want to talk to you. Do you know how to read?”

“I know almost all my letters,” answered

Amy, "and I can spell b, a, ba, but I can't read words."

"Miss Lizzie will teach you to read," said Mrs. Ryan.

"Me, mother!" interrupted Lizzie, who was doing something by the window. "I can never teach her, I am sure!"

"Why not?" asked her mother.

"Oh, I have not patience enough: it is such slow work."

"How do you suppose any one had patience with you? I thought, Lizzie, you promised to help me, when we undertook this business!"

"Oh, well!" said Lizzie. "I will do my very best, if you only think I can. I do not mind the trouble; but I am afraid I shall not succeed."

"You will succeed if you are willing to be told when you do not take the right way," answered her mother. "Have you ever sewed at all, Amy?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Amy. "Miss Fairbarn showed me, and I made her two shifts there. I used to go afternoons sometimes."

"I shall fix you some sewing," continued Mrs. Ryan, "and you must take pains to

learn. Can you find a spelling-book for her, Lizzie?"

After some searching, Lizzie succeeded in finding one among her old school books, and sat down to hear Amy's first lesson. The teacher was very patient and the pupil very attentive, and they got through very well. Lizzie was in good spirits, and thought she should have no trouble at all.

"You will not find it so easy, my dear, when you have gone on a while," remarked her mother, after Amy had left the room. "The novelty will soon wear off, and the lessons grow harder; but I hope you will keep on trying. The lessons will be as good for you as for her, if you are faithful in them."

"How, mother?"

"By giving you opportunities for patience and self-denial, my child. You have had very little chance to exercise either of these virtues in your life, thus far, but there is no doubt you will have occasion for them in future."

"I wish I were more like you, mother! But, somehow, it seems as if I never can be good, if I try ever so hard."

"How have you failed now, Lizzie?"

"Every way, mother. I don't do any thing

that I mean to, and I do every thing that I don't want to. Last Sunday I made ever so many good resolutions, and thought I should certainly remember them this time; but here it is Friday again, and I have not kept one of them. I am afraid I shall never be what I want to be."

"Never by making resolutions alone, Lizzie, you may be sure. As long as you rest only upon your own strength, you will fail every time. By your unassisted efforts you are no more able to help yourself than this poor child was to take herself out of the streets. My dear child," said Mrs. Ryan, with deep emotion, "why will you not at once make up your mind to go directly to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness?"

Lizzie sighed deeply, but did not answer, and the entrance of Amy prevented any further conversation.

CHAPTER II.

For several days, every thing went on smoothly with Amy. Her friends were kind and considerate, and she was too well satisfied with her new home not to try to please them. Mr. Ryan said the child grew fat so fast it was a real pleasure to see her. Lizzie was delighted with her progress in reading; and even Miss Rachel allowed that she did very well so far, though she prophesied that it would not last.

“You will see that something wrong will come out before a great while: you will catch her in some mischief yet.”

“How wonderful that would be, aunt Rachel!” said Lizzie. “I never heard of such a thing as mischief among any children belonging to us, did you?”

Aunt Rachel was displeased with what she regarded as quite impertinent, but did not condescend to reply.

One day, after Amy had been at Mr. Ryan’s almost two weeks, she was sent into the garden to cut some asparagus for dinner. Lizzie showed her how to perform the operation, and

then left her to herself. There was a long row of gooseberry bushes between the garden fence and the asparagus bed, and the fruit, which had nearly attained its full size, was a great temptation to Amy, who had never seen it growing before. She had been told never to touch any thing in the garden without permission, and had received a special warning in regard to the currants and gooseberries; but, as she found herself alone so near the tempting forbidden fruit, her newly acquired principles gave way, and gathering two or three gooseberries she put them hastily into her mouth. They were sour enough, but, like most children, Amy was fond of any thing sour. She waited a few moments, and gathered some more, and then a few more; and she was in the act of slipping the last into her pocket, when her arm was forcibly seized from behind, and turning round in a fright, she beheld Miss Rachel.

“So, miss,” said that lady, giving her by no means a gentle shake, “I have caught you, have I? I thought I should find you out in some such caper yet. Just come along into the house, and see what you will get, you little Irish thief;” and Miss Rachel led Amy along, crying bitterly all the way from fear and anger,

into the dairy, where Mrs. Ryan and Lizzie were employed.

"Here, sister," she exclaimed, as soon as she came near enough to be heard, "look at this little thing, with her pockets full of your gooseberries."

"What have you been doing, Amy? Picking the gooseberries?" asked Mrs. Ryan.

"No, ma'am," sobbed Amy, following the first impulse of an untaught child, and denying every thing.

"You little story-teller, you! Didn't I see you?"

"Hush, Rachel," said her sister. "Don't say you did not, Amy. That is telling a lie. See, here they are in your pocket now. How many did you eat?"

"She ate ever so many," interrupted Miss Rachel; "for I saw her at them some time before I caught hold of her."

"Why did you not speak to her, and stop her in time?" asked Mrs. Ryan. "I should think that would have been the better course."

"Because I wanted to make sure of her," answered Miss Rachel. "I always knew she would steal if she had a chance, and I am glad I caught her at it. She deserves a good whip-

ping at least," she continued, shaking the child by the arm, which she still held.

"Let go of her arm, Rachel!" said Mrs. Ryan, with emphasis.

"Aunt Rachel's charity is certainly not of the kind which rejoiceth not in iniquity," remarked Lizzie in her most satirical tones "She is as much delighted at finding out this poor, ignorant thing in stealing, as I should be with a new writing-desk." Lizzie's sarcasm had, for once, a good effect, for it silenced her aunt, who let go her hold of Amy's arm, and stood by in silence.

"What made you pick the berries, Amy?" asked Mrs. Ryan in a mild tone, drawing the child to her by both hands. "Did you forget what I told you? Now don't tell any thing but the truth. Did you forget, or was it because you wanted to see how they tasted? Was that it?"

"Yes, ma'am," stammered Amy, wiping her eyes with her apron.

"But don't you know I told you not to touch any thing in the garden? Now, Amy, if you do not mind me, I cannot keep you. I am willing to take pains with you, and teach you, if you will be obedient, and do just as

I say; but unless you do, I must send you back to the city again. I cannot keep a girl who does not mind me."

"Please, Mrs. Ryan, don't send me away," sobbed Amy; "I will be good."

"I hope you will remember, then, another time," continued Mrs. Ryan. "Now go upstairs to your room, and stay till I give you leave to come down. You must not go into the garden again till you can learn to let things alone." Amy disappeared, and was heard crying overhead.

"I wish very much you had stopped her when you first saw her, Rachel," said Mrs. Ryan to her sister. "If ever an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, it is in such a case as this."

"Oh, well!" said Miss Rachel, with a deep sigh, "I wish I had, I am sure. I never can do any thing right, it seems to me!" and with a melancholy aspect she left the dairy.

"Mother," said Lizzic, "I suppose I ought not to feel so, but I do wish aunt Rachel lived somewhere else. She is no more like you than—than—I am."

"And I wish, my daughter, that you could exercise a little patience and forbearance to—

ward your aunt Rachel. Why need you answer her so?"

Lizzie coloured. "Another of my broken resolutions," said she; "I never meant to do so again. I am fast coming to think that I have no character at all. I am sure I have no decision."

"My child, you are nothing in yourself. Your resolutions do not stand, because they are made without prayer and a proper dependence on God. I tell you, Lizzie, you are taking altogether the wrong way. You must seek strength from God."

"I am afraid I shall never be a Christian, mother, and after all I might not be any better. There is aunt Rachel: she makes great pretensions to piety, and really I do not see that she is any better than I am."

"That is nothing to the purpose: aunt Rachel, whatever else she is, is not your pattern, as you know very well."

"Well, mother, how shall I set myself to work?"

"Are you in earnest, Lizzie?" asked her mother, with a searching glance; "do you really desire to become a Christian, and to act like one?"

Lizzie did not answer at once, but at last she said, in a low voice, "I am afraid not, mother."

"Why not?"

"I don't know."

"Is it not because you know that you must then renounce many things in which you now take pleasure? Because you fear to encounter the self-denial and watchfulness necessary to a Christian course of life? Do not deceive yourself, my daughter, by fancying that you have a desire for holiness when you have not: it is far better that you should see your condition just as it is."

Lizzie did not answer; and the conversation ended, as so many conversations had done before, with a deep sigh upon her part, and an inward prayer on her mother's. Lizzie was, at times, almost a Christian, but she could not make up her mind to become one altogether.

Amy was called down at dinner time, and no allusion was made to the events of the morning. She had cried till her eyes were red and swollen, and the tears rolled down her face while she was trying to eat her dinner. Mrs. Ryan did not notice her agitation, but spoke to her as usual, and required her assistance in doing the after-dinner work. When

this was done, she got her book, and came to read as usual; her spirits became tranquillized by degrees, and before long she was heard singing over her sewing on the broad stone-step by the kitchen door. Miss Rachel set this down in her own mind as an evidence of her hardened depravity; but Mrs. Ryan was not sorry to hear it, as it showed that the child was not sullen. She took care to commend her work as highly as the truth would allow, when she brought it for inspection, and then set her about ripping an old dress, which was to be made over into pinafores. Amy worked very steadily till it was time to get tea, when she made the fire and put on the kettle, without waiting to be told, and set the table with more than ordinary care.

In the evening, when the family were assembled upon the back piazza, Amy crept round, and crouched at Mrs. Ryan's feet, on the doorstep. Mrs. Ryan put her hand on her head, which seemed to embolden the little girl to express what she was thinking about.

"I'm real sorry I got them berries," she half whispered,—glancing her eye round to be sure that Miss Rachel was not in hearing.

"I am glad you are sorry, Amy," replied

Mrs. Ryan. "What made you get them? Didn't you know that you were doing wrong?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the child.

"You must never touch any thing that does not belong to you, no matter what it is," continued Mrs. Ryan. "That is stealing. No one likes to have her things stolen. If any one should take away the new thimble and the scissors that Miss Lizzie gave you, you would feel very bad, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, ma'am. Once I sold some old ropes I found in the water, and got five cents for them, and Jenny Levy found where the money was, and stole it."

"It is very wicked, besides," pursued Mrs. Ryan. "God is angry with people who steal. He sees all you do, whether any one else does or not. He saw you get the berries this morning."

Amy again glanced her eye, almost fearfully around. "Can he see me now, Mrs. Ryan?"

"Yes, my child, every moment you live; and he not only sees what you do, but he knows even what you think. God gives you every thing you have. You would not be in such a good home now, if God had not given it to you."

Amy was silent a few moments, apparently in deep thought. Then she said softly: "I never saw Him, Mrs. Ryan."

"No one can see God," replied Mrs. Ryan; "but he sees us. He is everywhere at once. He is here now; and when you go to your room, he will be there. Now, will you remember, when you are tempted to do wrong again, that God sees you?"

"If I can," said Amy. "I want to be good."

"God will help you to be good if you ask him," continued her kind friend. "He wants little girls to be good, and will help them, if they really try. You must ask him, when you say your prayers—will you?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Amy; and Mrs. Ryan, thinking she had said enough, turned the conversation, after a few minutes silence.

"See how beautifully the moon shines on the river, Amy! It makes the water look like melted silver."

"It don't look like it does down by our house," said Amy. "The water there is all muddy and dirty, and smells bad, and there's dirty houses all round. Bad people live in them, that get drunk, and fight every night."

You never saw such as they have there. Does God see them too?"

"Yes, Amy."

"Why don't he make them be still, Mrs. Ryan?"

"I cannot tell you, my dear. We do not always know why God does things."

"I hope I will never go there again," continued Amy. "It is so nice here, and every one is so good to me. Some people were good to me there too. There are a great many good people there."

"Did you ever work out in the city, Amy?"

"Yes, ma'am. I worked out at Mrs. Rooney's eight weeks once, tending the little baby. She gave me two shillings a week."

"What did you do with the money?" asked Mrs. Ryan.

"I never got it, ma'am. My mother always took it and spent it. Mrs. Rooney said it was foolish in them to let me come out here, because there I might get money for my father all summer by my work; but I'd rather be here, and work for nothing, if I had to do three times as much."

"You must be a good girl then, Amy, if you want to stay here," said Mr. Ryan, who

had heard the last words of the child. "If you try to please us, and do as you are told, I mean to keep you till you grow up to be a woman; but it will all be as you behave, you know."

"I hope she will behave well after this," said Mrs. Ryan. "She will have to try very hard, and be very watchful over herself, for a long time; but I think she means to do her best. It is time for you to go to bed now. Good-night. It is so light that you will not need any candle."

Amy went up-stairs, and, after she had undressed herself and said her prayers, she seated herself on the floor by her little window, and resting her chin on the ledge, she began to reflect upon the events of the day. She felt very much ashamed to think that she had disobeyed Mrs. Ryan and taken the gooseberries. "I should not have cared half so much, if she had taken me and given me a whipping, like Mrs. Rooney, or thrown something at my head, like mother used to do. I should just have been mad; but she seemed only sorry that I had been naughty, and she wanted to make me good. Mrs. Rooney never cared what I did, so it didn't hurt her, nor mother either; but

these folks seem to want to make me good, any way." Just then a cloud passed over the moon, and Amy's thoughts took a new turn. "She said, God could see me up here in my room, even if it was all dark,"—and for a moment she felt afraid. "But Mrs. Ryan said it was he who brought me to this good place, and would help me to be good, if I asked him. But then, she said he was angry with me for getting the berries; so perhaps he won't let me stay." This idea distressed her very much for a few minutes; then she continued: "Mrs. Ryan said she forgave me if I was sorry, and perhaps he will too. He will know if I ask him, because he knows every thing I do and say. At any rate I mean to ask him."

Amy was rather puzzled how to present her petition; for in the two or three prayers she had learned, there did not seem to be any thing just suited to the case. So she kneeled down, and said, half aloud: "Please, God, forgive me for getting the gooseberries;" and she added, after a pause, "Forgive Jenny Levy for getting my pennies." Then she repeated again the prayers which Mrs. Ryan had taught her, and lying down, was fast asleep, almost immediately after her head had touched

the pillow. Lizzie, who was going up-stairs to bed, stopped before the door of Amy's room, and overheard the whole of her simple prayer.

“What a miserable creature I am!” she said to herself as she sat down in her own room. “Here is this poor, ignorant Irish child, who hardly knew she had a soul a few weeks ago, praying not only for the pardon of her own sins, but for the pardon of others; while I, who have always been taught ever since I was born, and have the best of parents besides to look up to, often pass day after day without so much as a pretence of prayer, except when I kneel with the rest at family prayer and in church, and then it is sometimes only pretence. If we should both die to-night, I believe this poor child might, perhaps, go directly to heaven, while I”—

Lizzie burst into tears and wept for some time; then she read a chapter in the Testament, and repeated her prayers before she went to sleep. She made many resolutions for the future, and thought she would commence a new course of life to-morrow; but to-morrow came, and the new course was not begun! Her sorrow for sin had passed away almost like a

dream, and she did not feel any disposition to recall it.

“Next Sunday is my birth-day, and that will be a good time to begin. I certainly will do differently after that. I do not mean to spend another year as I have done this.”

“Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” How many have silenced conscience with these flattering words, to whom that convenient season never came! Believe me, reader, there can be no time so convenient as to-day. Remember that you may easily fall short of that rest which remaineth to the people of God. Life is brief at best, to do what must be done to secure heaven at last. Shall it be said of you, as was said of some of old, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved”?

Some days passed before Amy was allowed to go into the garden again by herself; Mrs. Ryan telling her plainly, that she must show herself worthy before she could be trusted. Amy understood this, and took great pains to gain a good character. She was careful not to take or even to touch any thing which did not belong to her, and cautiously kept herself out of the way of temptation. Once, indeed, when

she thought herself alone in the dining-room after tea, she took a lump of white sugar from the bowl; but the moment she had done so, the thought that God saw her came over her, and she hastily put it back. She thought no one saw her, but she was mistaken. Mrs. Ryan and Miss Rachel were standing where they beheld the whole, and Mrs. Ryan said to her sister, "That looks hopeful, doesn't it?"

"I don't know," answered Miss Rachel: "it would have been more hopeful if she had not touched it."

"I cannot agree with you, Rachel. It was a temptation—a strong one for a child—firmly resisted, and that is an excellent sign."

"I imagine she was pretty sure of being found out," replied her sister. "She knew we were somewhere about, or that would have been the last of the sugar."

"You are hardly fair to her," returned her sister. "How can you allow yourself to be so prejudiced against such a mere child? You seem to see something bad in every thing about her. I am sure she does you no harm."

"I know I don't like her," replied Miss Rachel; "I cannot say why, that I know of; but I cannot bear her."

“That is not very reasonable, it seems to me.”

“Oh, I don’t pretend to be reasonable. I am not one of those cold, calculating mortals, that do every thing by rule and reason : I am the creature of impulse, and always shall be.”

“Suppose your impulses happen to be wrong ones, as in this case,” said Mrs. Ryan; “do you think you will stand excused before God, on the ground that you are the creature of impulse?”

“I do not expect to be saved by my works,” replied Miss Rachel; “I shall be saved by grace through faith, and that not by the deeds of the law, as the Bible says”—

“Are you in a state of salvation now, Rachel?”

“To be sure—I hope so,” answered the lady, in a tone of considerable indignation.

“And you believe yourself a branch of the true Vine?” pursued her sister.

“I hope so,” again said Miss Rachel. “Why do you ask such strange questions, Esther?”

“Because, Rachel, the tree is known by its fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Now it seems to me, that

prejudice, unkindness and want of charity, all of which you display toward this poor child upon every occasion, are much more like thistles than like figs. I advise you to consider the matter carefully, and see if it is not so."

"Well, Esther," said Miss Rachel, with a long-drawn sigh and the air of a martyr, "you seem to think I am the very worst creature in the world. I believe you think more of any little Irish beggar than you do of your own sister. But my conscience is clear, and I can bear it."

Amy was very proud when Mrs. Ryan said to her, after a week or two, "Now, Amy, I am going to send you into the garden after some green gooseberries to stew—if you think you can get along without eating any of them. Do you think you can?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Amy; and then added, in a less confident tone, "I am not sure, but I'll try."

"I shall ask you when you come in, whether you have eaten any," pursued Mrs. Ryan. "Will you tell me the truth about it?"

“Yes, ma’am, I will, but I guess I won’t eat ’em.”

Amy was as good as her word, and gathered the basin full of gooseberries “without touching one,” as she informed Mrs. Ryan, with exultation.

“That is being a good girl,” replied Mrs. Ryan; “and I am glad you are getting trustworthy; but you must not think, because you have come safely through this time, that you will have no more trouble. You will often feel a desire to do wrong, and unless you are very careful, you will. Our blessed Saviour said, ‘Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.’ I have great hopes of you, Amy. You have improved very much since you came here, and I should be very sorry that you should disappoint me. Now, wash your hands, and I will show you how to pull the tails off the gooseberries.”

“Tails,” repeated Amy, laughing; “do gooseberries have tails?”

Mrs. Ryan laughed too. “That is what Miss Lizzie calls one of my old-fashioned ways, Amy. My mother always used to call the stems of the berries, tails. See, this is the

way to do—pinch off the tops and stems, and rub off all that brown stuff.”

“Is that brown stuff the feathers, Mrs. Ryan?”

“You may call it so if you choose, child!”

Amy worked at the berries some time in silence, while Mrs. Ryan sat picking over some coffee at the same table.

“Your mother must have been a very nice woman, Mrs. Ryan,”—she said at last, meditatively rubbing a berry between her finger and thumb.

Mrs. Ryan smiled and sighed. “She was, indeed, a most excellent woman, Amy. I wish I was half as good.”

“Did she live here?” asked Amy.

“About four miles from here. Do you remember when we came home from church that round-about way last Sunday, a curious, old, low, red house, with a great tree over one end of it, that you thought was so pretty? My father and mother lived in that house, and I was born there. There was not another house within six miles of it, and the wolves used to howl in the cedar-swamp near by. I have often heard them when I was a child.”

“Wolves!” said Amy, opening her eyes

wide; "real wolves, such as I read to Miss Lizzie about in the book?"

"Yes, real wolves: they used to shut up the sheep every night then; and there were wild-cats and bears in the same swamp. One time a bear came to the house, and got into the cellar. Mother heard a noise in the cellar and went down, and there was the bear standing on his hind-legs, drinking out of the milk-pan."

"Did he bite her?" asked Amy, very much interested.

"Oh, no! he ran out of the cellar as fast as he could go. If you have finished the gooseberries you may make the fire, and give me the sieve and the other things—I am going to make something for tea."

CHAPTER III.

EVERY thing went on agreeably and comfortably at the farm for several weeks. Amy took great pains to improve herself, and learned very fast. She, by degrees, left off many uncouth and disagreeable ways and expressions, and became neat and careful in her dress and habits. She learned to milk and to churn, to clean the floor and wash the dishes; and she could now be sent into the garden or the store-room, without any fear that she would meddle with what did not belong to her. "May I touch this flower? May I look at those pictures? May I take that book?" were common expressions from her mouth.

Mrs. Ryan had connected her lessons in honesty, by giving Amy various pieces of property of her own, such as a thimble, some needles, a pair of scissors, &c., with a neat work-box to hold them; and she was very careful that no one should interfere with her possessions. She thus acquired a respect for the property of others, by seeing her own respected. "If you please," and "Thank you,"

were expressions as commonly used toward her as toward any other member of the family, and she was carefully enjoined to use them in speaking to others. She learned to read with remarkable quickness, and began to have writing-copies set for her on a slate. It is a fact, which will be attested by many people of experience, that the intellect of the vagabond children in the streets of cities is very much sharpened by the life they lead. They gain knowledge very rapidly, at the same time that they require a great deal of teaching—that is, they require constantly to feel the personal influence of the teacher.

Lizzie, to whom was committed the whole charge of Amy's education as far as books were concerned, succeeded much better than she expected, and became much attached to her young pupil. She did not always know how much it was reasonable to require, however, and her mother now and then found it advisable to put in a word.

“That will do,” she said one afternoon, when Amy had tried the patience of her young teacher severely, by miscalling words, and spelling wrong; “that will do now, you may go and pick the berries for tea. You must

not keep her at her book too closely, Lizzie," she remarked, when Amy had left the room. "Children's eyes get dazzled by looking too long at letters and words; and after that, any attempt to continue the lesson only helps to confuse them more and more. That is a blunder which young teachers often make. It is not worth while to keep a young child reading at one time more than fifteen minutes, or twenty, at most; it is better to divide the lessons, and hear them at different times."

"But Amy is not so very young, mother—she is twelve years old; and it is much more convenient to hear it all at once, and have done with it."

"She is not a young child, to be sure, my dear, but her mind has never been disciplined. As for its not being as convenient, I allow that; but I do not think that your convenience is of as much consequence as Amy's improvement."

Lizzie looked hurt for a moment; but a little consideration showed her that her mother was right.

"My time is not of much consequence, to be sure," said she. "I am afraid I have not much of a missionary spirit; I am always

thinking of myself first. Amy gets along very well, mother, don't you think so?"

"Remarkably fast: I never saw a child learn more quickly. Perhaps it is not so well for you, that your first experiment in teaching should be with such a bright subject. Not one child in ten, in any ordinary school, would make so much progress."

"What do you suppose is the reason?"

"One reason undoubtedly is, that she considers it a privilege to be taught," answered Mrs. Ryan. "Don't you know that a great many children, great and little, go to school with the idea that it is a burden unjustly imposed, and think it quite a favour done to the teacher, if they condescend to learn their lessons and behave themselves?"

"I think, mother, if you and father are willing, I should like to try teaching in the district school next summer, if I live—and the trustees will let me."

"I don't know what your father will say," replied Mrs. Ryan; "but, for my part, I think it an excellent idea. Three months spent in teaching would do you more good than a year's schooling. You will then be obliged to find out what you know, and what you do not know;

and you will gain a deal of discipline, both of mind and temper. But, Lizzie, you need not wait till next summer. I heard Squire Barnhurst saying, that they should not employ a master in the red school-house next winter, as there are few children in the district except very little ones. It would be a good place to begin; and if you can get your father's consent, I am quite willing for my share."

Amy lived in a constant state of amazement at her own happiness. She was a good deal puzzled by the state in which she found herself. She was never whipped nor scolded, and was seldom found fault with, and yet she was conscious of being more completely governed than ever she had been in her life before. Mrs. Ryan always seemed to know by instinct when she was likely to do wrong, and prevented instead of punishing. But Amy began to learn self-government; she watched herself carefully, and tried her best to keep herself from harm.

"It is a shame to make them trouble, when they are all so kind to me,"—she often said to herself. Sometimes she had higher thoughts than these; and these thoughts were very apt

to come when she sat herself down upon the floor to look out of the window, before going to bed, which was her constant practice upon pleasant evenings.

“God brought me here,” she would say to herself, often half aloud; “and Mrs. Ryan says he puts it into the minds of kind people, like Miss Fairbarn and the Sunday-school ladies, to be kind to us, poor children. I suppose He made that kind lady take such good care of poor Tommy McHale, when he had the consumption. Mrs. Ryan says he is glad when I am good. That is strange; but if he is, I mean to be good to please him. I wish I could see him, and tell him how glad I am that he made me come here.”

As Amy's mind opened, her heart grew with it. She often thought with deep sorrow on those she had left behind, in the miserable place on the bank of the river, and wished she could do something for them. At first, she considered only the poverty and dirt which surrounded them, compared with the neatness and plenty of the farm; but by degrees she became conscious of another evil, far worse than any outward penury. It made her miserable to think how wicked all her relations

were. "Mother and father get drunk, and fight, and tell lies; and they teach the children to tell lies, and steal too. I know how many times mother has sent me round to Miss Fairbarn's to say, that we had nothing to eat in the house, and father could not get any work, when he had plenty of wood to saw, and spent the money he earned in whisky and beer. And when she used to send Jenny and Billy round begging, they would often get handkerchiefs and towels out of the yards, and bring them home. Oh! it does seem too hard for them boys to stay there, and grow up thieves and drunkards."

These thoughts often took complete possession of the child's mind, and made her deeply sorrowful. At such times it was scarcely possible to get a word or a smile from her, and she went about the house almost like a machine. It was some time before Mrs. Ryan went to the bottom of this trouble; but one Sunday evening, when they were sitting on the steps of the piazza, (always a sort of holy ground for Amy,) it all came out in a gush of tears. Mrs. Ryan was much affected by the child's solicitude for her friends.

"I am very glad you think so much of your

mother and brothers, Amy," said she; "and we will try and see what can be done for them. Do you think your mother would be willing to let Jenny and Billy go to places in the country, if we could get some for them?"

Amy reflected for a moment. "I don't believe she would: not unless they worked for money, and she got the money."

"That could not be done," said Mrs. Ryan. "A boy of that age, and especially such a boy, could never do more than to earn his board and clothes—probably not even that. It would be only out of charity that any one would be willing to take him. But would not your mother be glad to have him where he would be well brought up, and learning to be a good boy?"

Amy shook her head sadly. "She don't care any thing about that, Mrs. Ryan. She says her children belong to her, and she has a right to their wages and their work, and to make them support her. Besides, she says she don't want them to grow up to feel above her, and think themselves better than she is. And then she would not have any one to beg for her if the boys were away."

"Did you use to beg when you were in the city, Amy?"

“Yes, ma’am; for cold victuals: that was all we had to live on. I used to bring in my basket, if I got any thing, and they all crowded round it, and snatched what they could. I never saw a table set in the house. Mrs. Rooney used to set a table, but not like you do.”

“But could not your mother support herself without making you beg?”

“I suppose she might if she had worked,” answered Amy; “but she didn’t like to work.”

“And did you like to beg?” asked Mrs. Ryan.

“I didn’t mind it much at first, when it was not too cold,” answered Amy. “The girls used to give me bread and butter—the kitchen girls, you know—and I used to get warm by the fire; so I’d just as soon beg as do any thing else. But after I knew Miss Fairbarn, and began to learn something, I grew ashamed to beg. It seemed so mean, somehow, and Miss Fairbarn used to say, ‘I hope you will get above begging one of these days, Amy.’ Once, when mother sent me round there to tell a long story about her being sick, Miss Fairbarn put on her cloak, and she and her brother went down with me. It was a real stormy

evening, with snow on the ground, and mother didn't think of her coming round; so she had got a jug of whisky, and she and Ann Dean and another, were drinking and laughing, and so on. Miss Fairbarn just came to the door, and looked in; and when she saw what was going on, she turned and went away again, without saying a word. Then, mother said it was all my fault, and I had told stories about her; and she beat me, and turned me out of doors."

"What did you do, then?"

"I went back up to Miss Fairbarn's, and she let me stay there all night. After that, I could not bear to beg any more. She used to whip me if I did not, but I wouldn't always; and so, finally, she said I was so spoiled that I was not good for any thing any more, and I might go where I liked. But she keeps the others at it, and they will never know any better. Oh dear, I wish I could help them."

"Well, Amy, you must not despair. You may be able to help them yet, if you are a good girl yourself. In the mean time, you must not forget to pray for them. You can do that, if you cannot do any thing else; and

God may make some way for you yet. You know all things are in his power, and he is always ready to hear us when we pray."

Amy's mind was relieved of part of its load by this conversation; for, if she could do nothing else, she could at least pray. And her faith in all Mrs. Ryan told her was so implicit, that she never thought of doubting that God would answer her prayers. She loved to repeat to herself the hymns which Lizzie had taught her from time to time, especially the one which commences—

"Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour,
Once became a child like me."

As she sat, with her work, on the broad stone before the kitchen door, (which was her favourite place for sewing,) she used to sing these hymns to herself for hours at a time. From this stone she could see the cows in their pasture, and the men at work in the field, and see her hen—her own hen—in the coop, and the pretty little white chickens running about, and uttering lamentable cries whenever they lost themselves in the thicket of grass and reeds—to them a howling wilderness behind their habitation.

There was one person in the family, as has been already apparent, whom Amy could never succeed in pleasing. Miss Rachel was never satisfied with her, let her do as she might. She watched the child as a cat watches a mouse, and the least slip was caught at, and made the theme of long comments. Did Amy forget to wash out her dish-cloth and lay it on the grass, or was a cup found not perfectly dry, Miss Rachel asserted her belief that she was an incorrigible slattern. Were Miss Rachel's gloves or handkerchief mislaid—not a very uncommon event, by the way—Amy was always meddling with every thing, and must have moved them. Did Amy show any signs of ill-humour or idleness—things not unheard of among the best of children—Miss Rachel made it a text on which to preach a sermon on the wickedness and ingratitude of all children, and of this child in particular. Amy never dusted clean. Amy would not remember without being told over a dozen times. If she had the management of her, she would teach her better than to spell the word scissors wrong three times over.

“How do *you* spell scissors, aunt Rachel?” asked Lizzie, demurely.

“S-i-s-z-o-r-s, to be sure,” said aunt Rachel, indignantly.

“Well done, Rachel!” said Mrs. Ryan, laughing. “You beat Amy, altogether; I think there can be no doubt that you are competent to attend a common school, if not to teach one.”

“I should hope so,” answered Miss Rachel, with great dignity. “I could do so, of course, if I choose; but I am thankful I am not reduced to that yet.”

Amy tried very hard, for a long time, to win Miss Rachel’s favour, but without success; and she really began to dislike her very much.

One night she was sitting by the door, spelling out her Sunday-school lesson in the Testament, an advance in learning of which she was quite proud. She read slowly: “Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.” “What does persecute mean, Miss Lizzie?” she called out to Lizzie, who was at a little distance, engaged in training a morning-glory round the kitchen window.

“Persecute?” answered Lizzie. “It means to treat any one cruelly and unkindly without any reason.”

“Then I am sure Miss Rachel persecutes me,” said Amy, with all gravity, speaking to

herself; "for she scolds me without any reason at all. I suppose I must pray for her, then."

Amy had an auditor of whom she was not aware. Miss Rachel had entered the kitchen while she was speaking, and overheard this very natural application of Scripture. Her first impulse, we regret to say, was to box Amy's ears; but she checked herself in time, and she reflected that it would not be much for her dignity to be found listening; so she retreated, more incensed at Amy than ever, and more desirous to find some legitimate ground of blame.

A short distance from Mr. Ryan's farm there lived some people, in rather poor circumstances, by the name of Clarke. The family consisted of the father, mother, and three daughters; the oldest about twenty, and the youngest twelve. The father, without being exactly a bad man, was what is commonly called thriftless. He would now and then do a piece of work when hard pushed by necessity, and, as he was really an excellent workman, he made good wages. But he very much preferred hanging round the steps of the tavern or the post-office, and talking politics with idlers like himself, to making any exertions for a living. His wife and daughters were a

good deal like him, except that they were as proud as they were lazy.

Mrs. Clarke would talk for hours, when she could find an auditor, about the times when they were well off, and the days before she was married, when she had every thing she wanted, and had no occasion to work unless she chose. The girls might all have had respectable places, but they would not work out. They felt themselves far above living in any one's kitchen. Sometimes, however, the two oldest would condescend to go out for a few weeks, that they might provide themselves with some especial piece of finery, such as a silk frock, a velvet bonnet, or a new mantilla; but for decent under-clothes and respectable every-day garments they cared very little.

Lucinda and Malvina, (or Cindy and Viny as they were usually called,) would go about all the week in faded, dirty calicoes, torn out at the top and draggled at bottom, petticoats below their frocks, ragged stockings, and shoes down at heel; but on Sunday they sailed into church in light silks or gaudy bareges, and with their worked cotton handkerchiefs and black lawn veils, enjoyed the idea of dressing like ladies.

No one ever wanted to hire them except in cases of extremity, their manners were so disagreeable; and, moreover, it was remarked, that tea and sugar did not last long, and butter was apt to fall short, when they were about the house: consequently, "one of the Clarke girls" was the very last resort for those who wanted help.

One day, in the season of ripe currants, Mrs. Clarke sent her youngest daughter, Philathea—for with all their other finery they had very fine names—up to Mrs. Ryan's with a tin pail, to get some currants for supper. Mrs. Ryan had a great many more currants than she wanted to use herself, and told Philathea to go and gather her pail full, but be sure and not touch any thing else. Philathea promised obedience, and went accordingly.

Mr. Ryan had a young apricot tree, which was just coming into bearing, and had about a dozen apricots on it, all easily within reach. Amy had received an especial charge about those apricots; and though she often watched them with interest, as they grew and ripened from day to day, she would have thought almost as soon of biting off one of her own fingers as of touching one of them. But Philathea had

no such scruples; and having ascertained that she was without witnesses, she hastily gathered all the apricots but one, and slipped them into her pocket. She had hardly returned to the currant bushes, before Amy, who had been out to the end of the orchard looking for a stray chicken, passed through the garden, carrying the chicken in her apron. As she passed a cherry tree, however, she stopped and gathered a handful or two of the ripe fruit—a thing which she was perfectly at liberty to do, on condition that she would be careful and not break the branches.

Amy returned the chicken to the coop, and then sat down on her favourite stone to rest after her run, and to eat her cherries. Then she threw away the stones, gathering up two or three that had fallen around the door, and went into the house to get her sewing; but as she was returning to her place, Mrs. Ryan called her and employed her about the house till tea time. Meantime, Philathea, having gathered her pail full of currants, and eaten rather more of them and of the apricots than was convenient, took her way homeward, dropping, not without design, two or three of the apricot-stones near the kitchen door.

When Mr. Ryan came into tea he looked very grave. "Amy," said he, as soon as he entered the dining-room, "have you been into the garden this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir; two or three times," answered Amy, readily.

"Did you go near the apricot tree?"

"I don't remember. I think it's likely I might," said Amy, conscious of something unusual in his tone, and a little confused by it.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Ryan.

"Some one has been at the apricot tree, and picked all but one," answered Mr. Ryan.

"Why, Amy! did you pick Mr. Ryan's apricots?" asked her mistress, in a tone of grave sorrow.

"No, ma'am; I never touched one of them," exclaimed Amy, with great vehemence, distressed at the accusation; "I—"

"What did I see you eating out on the step when you came in from the garden?" interrupted Miss Rachel.

"I was eating cherries," said Amy. "Mrs. Ryan said I might have as many as I wanted."

Miss Rachel rose and went out; but returned in a moment, exclaiming in a triumphant tone, "Here is what tells the story! I found

these apricot-stones close to the place where she was sitting, and there is not a cherry-stone anywhere round. That settles the matter."

"I picked up all the cherry-stones, and threw them away," said Amy, sobbing. "Miss Rachel always wants to make it out that I am to blame."

"You impudent little—," began the enraged Miss Rachel, but her sister checked her. "Hush, Rachel! Amy, you must not speak so to Miss Rachel. Go up-stairs, and stay till I come."

Amy went away crying bitterly. She was sure she had not touched the forbidden fruit, but appearances were against her, and she was afraid no one would believe her. She felt as if her heart would break, as she reflected that perhaps she might not be able to prove her innocence, and so Mrs. Ryan would send her away. But Amy had learned, by this time, what was the best thing to do in any sort of trouble: so she kneeled down and prayed that God would help her out of her difficulty, and bring matters right; and rising very much comforted, she took her Testament and sat down to read it, carefully spelling all the hard

words. By this means she had quite composed herself when Mrs. Ryan appeared.

The lady questioned her closely; and Amy gave a clear account of herself, from the time that she went after the chicken till she came in to wait on the tea-table. Mrs. Ryan was a person of penetration, and had much experience in dealing with all sorts of children, and she was pretty well satisfied that Amy was innocent.

"If you were eating cherries there, Amy, how does it happen that there are none of the stones about the door?"

"Because I picked them all up. You said you didn't like to see them lying about—don't you know?"

"True!" said Mrs. Ryan, "so I did. Well, Amy, I am pretty sure you are not the one to blame; but remember, my child, that God has seen you all day!"

"Then He knows I didn't get them," answered the child, readily.

"Amy is not the thief, you may depend," said Mrs. Ryan to her husband, on returning to the dining-room.

"None so blind as those that won't see!" ejaculated Miss Rachel.

"I have my own ideas about the matter,"

continued Mrs. Ryan; "but I do not care to speak at present."

"Philathea Clarke was here this afternoon," exclaimed Lizzie, struck with a new idea.

"That's enough," said the farmer, with emphasis; "there's no occasion to blame Amy."

"Well, now, I call that very uncharitable," exclaimed Miss Rachel, "to charge it upon poor Philathea."

"Why more than upon poor Amy?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, she is a regular thief, and was brought up to it. You know she got the gooseberries."

Lizzie was provoked past all patience.

"Maybe aunt Rachel got them herself," said she. "She was out in the garden this afternoon, and she knew just where to look for the stones. I think appearances are decidedly against her."

Aunt Rachel rose with majestic dignity: "I am not going to stay here to be insulted," said she, and marched out of the room, slamming the door after her with much violence.

"Lizzie, Lizzie," said her mother, reproachfully, "when will you learn to rein your tongue?"

“Well, mother, I did not mean it to come out that time,” answered Lizzie; “but aunt Rachel is too bad. She has had a regular spite against Amy ever since she came here, and loses no chance to make her out the worst child that ever was. If she ever takes a dislike to a person, she will go all lengths in order to find something to justify it.”

“My daughter,” said Mr. Ryan, gravely, “I think you forget that you are speaking to your mother about her own sister.”

Lizzie coloured deeply. “I forgot that,” said she. “But, mother, I am sure Amy did not get the apricots.”

“I am pretty well satisfied about them,” answered Mrs. Ryan; “but remember, Lizzie, that whatever suspicions you may have, you must not mention them to any one. It is never right to make such a charge against any person, unless we have proof positive. The truth will be pretty sure to come out in the end.”

But the truth was destined to come out much sooner than Mrs. Ryan had anticipated. Amy had forgotten her troubles in sleep for at least two hours; Miss Rachel’s wounded dignity had also found repose, and Mrs. Ryan,

who was commonly the last person awake in the house, was beginning her own preparations for retiring, when she was startled by two or three hasty knocks at the side door, and by hearing her own name called. She stepped quickly to the window, which was open, and asked what was the matter.

“Oh, Mrs. Ryan!” cried a voice, which she at once recognised as Cindy Clarke’s, “do come right away down to our house! Philly’s got a fit. Father has gone to the village for the doctor; but it’s so far, and he’s dreadful slow. Do come quick!”

“I will be there immediately,” said Mrs. Ryan, returning at once to her room for her bonnet and shawl. She was not at all afraid to go alone, but thought it best to inform her husband where she was going, lest he should be alarmed at finding her absent. As soon as he was fairly awake, however, he insisted on accompanying her. “There is not the strength of a bulrush in Clarke, and the women are no better: you will want me, I know.”

They made all the haste possible, and arrived at Mr. Clarke’s almost as soon as Cindy herself. True enough, Philly was very sick. Though not exactly in a fit, she was suffering

from a severe attack of cholic. Mrs. Ryan saw at once what to do, and did not wait for the doctor's arrival.

"We must put her feet in warm water at once," said she. "Cindy, do you make a fire, and put on the kettle as soon as you can."

"Oh, I can't! I can't do nothing! Oh, she's a dying! She's a going now! Oh dear!"

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried Mrs. Clarke and Cindy, in chorus. "Oh, tan't no use! Wait till the doctor comes—I know she'll die!" and so on.

Mrs. Ryan soothed and entreated in vain; and as the doctor did not come, there really seemed some danger of the child's dying unless something was done.

"Look here, Cindy," said Mr. Ryan, in his strong, clear voice, a little more emphatical than usual; "this will never do. I have made the fire, and now you must go and get the water, for I cannot find a pail; and stop making a noise, both of you, do you hear? Go, now, and do as I tell you." Cindy was quiet in a moment, and left the room to do as she was told. The water was soon hot; and as quick as a whole tub could be found, Philly's

feet were placed in it. She was relieved for a moment, but the spasms returned with redoubled violence.

“Have you any paregoric, or laudanum in the house?” asked Mrs. Ryan.

“I don’t know,” said Mrs. Clarke, wiping his eyes; “there’s a lot of bottles of doctor’s stuff on the top shelf of that closet there.”

Mrs. Ryan opened the door designated, but she found such a medley of half-filled, unmarked vials, that she was afraid of making a mistake, and begged her husband to go for her own.

“It is on the upper shelf of the medicine cupboard, in the back right-hand corner. The bottles are marked, and you had better bring both.”

Mr. Ryan was away as soon as the words were spoken, and Mrs. Ryan turned again to the patient, upon whose forehead were standing great drops of perspiration, while the tears rolled down her face in profusion. She looked for a handkerchief, but found she had left her own at home; and seeing Philathea’s dress lying on a chair, she took it up, and put her hand into the pocket. Philly saw the movement, and distressed as she was, she made an

effort to stop her. But Mrs. Ryan was too quick for her. She pulled out, first, two green harvest apples, then some gooseberries, and then some of the missing apricots ; finally, at the end of all, she came to the handkerchief. She made no remark, but laid the fruit carefully away, glad to have the means of clearing Amy so effectually. At that moment the sound of wheels was heard at the door, and the doctor entered.

“You are before me as usual, Mrs. Ryan,” was his first salutation. “I think I must take you regularly into partnership. What is the matter here?”

“It’s eating unripe fruit, doctor,” said Mrs. Ryan.

“Oh, ho ! How much did you eat, Philly?”

“She didn’t eat any,” interposed Cindy ; “only the currants she got at Mrs. Ryan’s.”

“Was that all, Philly?” asked the doctor. “Now tell me the truth. You know I cannot cure you unless you do.”

“I ate a few apricots,” said Philly.

“How many did you eat?”

“Eight or nine.”

“Eight or nine ! and swallowed the stones, I suppose ?”

“Not all of them.”

“No,” said Mrs. Ryan. “You dropped some of them on the door-step, where Amy was sitting. But did you not eat any apples or gooseberries?”

“Yes,” said Philly, sulkily.

“Have you any laudanum here?” asked the doctor of Mrs. Clarke.

“There is none in the house,” said Mrs. Ryan; “but Mr. Ryan has gone for some, and here he comes.”

The doctor made a prescription, which soon took effect; and Philly, after a while, lay down and fell asleep. Mrs. Ryan thought it best, however, to stay all night; and Mr. Ryan and the doctor returned home. Philly slept quietly, and Mrs. Ryan sent the rest of the family to bed, in order that she might not be disturbed. As she sat by the bed-side, and looked round the room, she wondered that people could be content to live after such a fashion. The Clarkes believed in “always putting the best foot forward,” as they say—that is, in making a fine show, whether there was any thing to support it or not. Consequently their parlour was well and somewhat showily furnished, and so was the best bed-room, which opened from it. But the room where Mrs. Ryan sat, being

one which was not expected to be seen by company, was not only uncarpeted, but dirty. There was no apology for a washstand; no table: the bed was laid on the cords of the bedstead, which were all slackened, and dropping in the middle, while under it was a perfect magazine of old shoes, rags, and other articles of the kind, all plentifully covered with dust and dirt. A little bit of looking-glass was nailed to the wall, by the side of which, on a chair, lay the very dirtiest brush and comb, Mrs. Ryan thought she had ever seen. Sunday frocks and petticoats, in various stages of dissolution, adorned the walls, or were stuffed into the closets; while, below the lower shelf, stood two or three jars of what Mrs. Clarke was pleased to call "sacs." Philathea's undergarments were in a lamentable state, and her stockings had apparently never been mended at all.

The cost of the silk shawl which Mrs. Clarke had lately purchased, would have provided the whole family with decent shoes and stockings for a year; and the difference between the expensive hats of the older girls and good plain, straw bonnets, would have furnished a bed-room comfortably. But, as Lizzie said,

they bought the articles of which they felt the most need.

Mrs. Ryan returned in time to dress herself and sit down to breakfast with the family; but she said nothing about the disclosures of the night before, till breakfast was nearly over. Then, calling Amy, she said:—

“You were quite right about the apricots, my child. I have found out who took them. I am glad to find that you are as good a girl as I thought you.”

“Then Philly Clarke did get them,” exclaimed Lizzie, while Amy’s plain face mantled with a blush and smile, which made it really beautiful.

“How did you find out?” asked Miss Rachel.

“I found some of them in her pocket last night, when I was looking for her handkerchief. You know I stayed there till this morning. I should not be surprised if she pays pretty dearly for her feast.”

“Is she very sick, Mrs. Ryan?” asked Amy, rather anxiously.

“She was very sick last night. I do not know how she will be when she wakes.”

“I suppose you are glad she is sick, Amy?” said Miss Rachel, rather sharply.

Amy opened her eyes wide, but contented herself with replying simply, "No, ma'am."

"Would you like to do something for Philly, Amy?" asked Mrs. Ryan, about half an hour after breakfast.

"Yes, ma'am, I should like it very much," answered Amy, joyfully.

"I have been making some gruel for her," continued Mrs. Ryan, "and you may take it down, and ask how she is; but do not stay, or have any talk with them."

"Yes, ma'am," again answered Amy; and, putting on her little new sun-bonnet, and carrying her bright tin pail with great care, she set out. She obeyed her commands to the letter. Mrs. Clarke invited her in, with a view to catechise her about her family, and how she came to be with Mrs. Ryan—subjects upon which she was very curious; but Amy declined entering, and hastened home.

Philly continued very sick for some days, and Mrs. Ryan was frequently with her. She endeavoured to bring her to some just idea of her transgressions, but without success. She rejected with scorn the notion that she had been guilty of theft; and her mother thought Mrs. Ryan very stingy to make such

a fuss about a few apricots. When Philly was able to be about again, her mother sent her up to the house for some cherries; but Mrs. Ryan said quietly:—

“No, Philly. Your mother should be welcome to the fruit, but I cannot trust you in the garden. If Amy has time she shall gather some cherries, and take them down before tea; but I cannot allow you to go into the garden again, unless some one is at leisure to look after you.”

Philly departed in great anger; and when Mrs. Ryan sent Amy with a fine basket of cherries, she was informed by Cindy, that she might take them back again, and “tell *Miss* Ryan that they didn’t want none of her cherries, nor her neither.” A message which Amy delivered with her usual simplicity and distinctness.

“How glad you must be, mother,” said Lizzie. “Only think how much trouble it will save you, if the Clarkes get up a quarrel!”

“You need not flatter yourself, Lizzie,” said her father. “It will last no longer than till the next time they want to borrow something. They are welcome to all they can get off the place,

I am sure, but I will not have them in the garden."

True enough, Viney came up the very next evening with a bowl. She would like to borrow a little molasses to make some gingerbread, and mother would send as much back to-morrow. Mrs. Ryan filled the bowl without any remark. Mrs. Clarke was always borrowing, and always going to pay, but never paid.

CHAPTER IV.

AMY was now growing to be a very useful girl, and could be trusted to do any thing which she knew how to do without overlooking. Mrs. Ryan did not permit her to perform the nicer operations of the dairy, reserving them especially for her own hand, but she allowed her to milk, and to strain the milk; and, when there was not too much to be done, Amy could get breakfast and tea as well as any one. She learned to iron too: and a happy child she was when, after repeated trials, she succeeded in ironing one of Mr. Ryan's best shirts, "as well," said Mrs. Ryan, "as I could do it myself." She began to take great care of her clothes, and to feel a degree of pride and pleasure in appearing well dressed; and no one ever saw her with holes in her stockings, or with a dirty face or disordered hair.

Amy could now read quite well, and write copies in joining-hand, and she was very fond of her book. Indeed, it was just now rather a source of trouble to her, for she used to hurry through her work as fast as she could, in order

to be able to sit down at leisure to some book from Lizzie's juvenile library, and she sometimes did things rather carelessly.

This propensity finally brought upon her a sad misfortune. Lizzie had taken a great deal of pains to embroider a couple of night-caps, intended as a wedding present to her Sunday-school teacher, and had succeeded in producing two beautiful ones, which she washed; and, intending to starch and iron them herself, she wrapped them in a towel, and put them into a basket with the rest of the clothes, giving Amy a charge to tell her when the irons were hot. But Amy, while waiting for the irons to heat, had set herself down to read, and the irons heated and cooled again before she thought of them, and it was necessary to make more fire and wait again.

In a little while she was roused by the striking of the clock, and startled to see how much time she had spent in reading, she snatched an iron from the fire, and commenced operations on the first article she took from the basket, which happened to be Miss Lizzie's caps. But, if the irons were too cold before, they were as much too hot now; and, at the first stroke, the one she held went through the delicate muslin on which



She was aroused by the striking of the clock. p. 86.

Lizzie had bestowed so much labour. Alarmed and confused, she put the iron down on the ironing-cloth, as she supposed, and took up the cap to examine the extent of the mischief. It was irreparable, that was clear; and she was considering what she had better do, when she perceived a strong smell of burning, and saw, to her utter horror, that she had set the iron down upon the towel containing the other cap, which, as well as the ironing-cloth, was burned through and through!

Child-like, Amy burst into tears; but she did not cry long. She remembered that she had been charged always to tell of an accident as soon as it happened; so she took up the burnt remains of the two pretty caps, and went to show them to Miss Lizzie. The female part of the family were sitting in the parlour, with some visitors, when she entered, and she hesitated about speaking.

“What is it, Amy?” asked Mrs. Ryan, supposing that some crisis had arrived in the dinner arrangements.

“If you please, Miss Lizzie, would you look here?” said Amy, in a tremulous voice, and holding up the lamentable remains of the caps, one in each hand.

“You”—began Lizzie; but she did not continue. She took the caps—saw at a glance that they were ruined—and, passing Amy without a word, went straight out of the room, and up-stairs.

“How did it happen, Amy?” asked Mrs. Ryan.

“The irons were too hot, ma’am,” faltered Amy; and, overcome by her distress, she burst into tears again.

“Don’t cry, child. That will do no good. Go and finish your ironing, and be more careful another time.”

Amy withdrew, quite heart-broken at the thought of having so distressed Miss Lizzie; and as soon as the visitors departed, Mrs. Ryan went into the kitchen to investigate matters, followed by Miss Rachel.

“How came you to be so careless this morning, Amy—and idle too, for you do not seem to have done any thing? What have you been about?”

“Reading, ma’am.”

“But did I not tell you, never to read till your work was done?”

“I was waiting for the irons to heat,” said Amy; “and then the fire went out, and I made

more; and then I saw how late it was, and began on the first thing I took up, and the irons were too hot, and'——

“ You see, Amy, all the trouble comes from not minding exactly what I said. If you had let the book alone till the work was done, you would have had time enough to read then, and would not have done so much mischief. Now you must iron almost all the afternoon to get through: and I shall put away the book, and not let you have it again. Go on with your work now, and be as careful as you can.”

Amy obeyed as meekly as possible. Much as she regretted the loss of her book, she was still more sorry for Miss Lizzie's disappointment; and she turned over in her mind all sorts of schemes for repairing the loss, but could think of none that seemed likely to be successful. At last a thought struck her—There were her chickens! She had some very fine ones of the new breed, which she was nursing with great care and attention. She had heard that such chickens sometimes sold for high prices; and perhaps Mr. Ryan would dispose of her's for her the next time he went to the city, and get enough to pay for the caps. It required not a little effort on Amy's

part to make up her mind to this sacrifice, for she was quite proud of her chickens. But she came to a decision at last, and resolved to consult Mr. Ryan on the first opportunity.

Lizzie appeared at dinner, with her eyes a little the worse for weeping, but otherwise quite as usual; the only sign of irritability about her being the way in which she declined aunt Rachel's condolences.

"I would rather lose twenty caps, aunt Rachel, than have you undertake to pity me. You always seem afraid that people will not be unhappy enough about their misfortunes, unless you help them by making matters as bad as possible."

"Well, Miss Lizzie, I shall not trouble you again with sympathy, you may be sure. I would not have your temper for a small sum. I only hope you will be satisfied with your pet after this. You never care how much she annoys other people; but when it comes to yourself, you have no more patience than any one else. For my part, I see no use in letting her read at all. If she has the spelling-book and Testament, that is enough for her. She will be setting up for a learned lady next, and neglecting every thing for reading."

“Like a certain lady of my acquaintance,” said Mr. Ryan; “who let all the water boil out of the pot, while she was reading an old volume of magazines. Do you remember, Rachel, what sort of a time there was in the kitchen, when Jane came back and found the beef and beans sticking to the bottom of the pot?”

“Pshaw!” said Miss Rachel. “That was only once.”

“And this is only once,” said Lizzie.

“We cannot expect a child like Amy to get along without some mishaps,” said Mrs. Ryan. “I shall take care that it does not happen again. I am sorry for Lizzie’s loss; and, I must say, I think she showed a good deal of forbearance in not scolding Amy—for it was really very provoking.”

“I cannot help laughing,” said Lizzie, “to think how terrified the poor child looked, holding up the fragment of a cap in each hand, and drawling out, in a tragic tone, ‘If—you—please,—Miss Lizzie.’ After all, I had the pleasure of working them; and Miss Hyatt will give me credit for the intention.”

“Come, come, Amy, don’t cry any more, you will do better next time,” said Lizzie, going into the kitchen some time after dinner,

and finding Amy with the tears still rolling down her face at intervals. “ ‘ There is no use in crying for spilt milk,’ as the saying is, you know. Finish your ironing, and then I want you to do an errand for me in the village. Do you think you can walk there and back before tea ? ”

“ Oh yes, ma’am,” said Amy, joyfully ; “ I can walk there and back in an hour and a half, easy enough.”

“ You had better go by the back road, it is so much more shady and pleasant ; and don’t say any thing to Philly Clarke, or any of those girls, if you meet them : they are not good friends for you to be with.”

“ Philly Clarke says bad words sometimes, I know,” said Amy.

“ She says a great many things that she ought not,” replied Lizzie. “ People that talk so much almost always do. But now, if you have finished, put away the things, and go and dress yourself ; and when you are ready, come to me, and I will give you a note for Miss King.”

Amy was soon ready. And receiving her commission, she set out upon her walk, with the agreeable consciousness that she had plenty

of time before her, and need not hurry. A walk through the green lane to the village was one of Amy's great delights, especially when she had time to sit down at the bridge, to rest herself; to listen to the birds and the water; to watch the cloud-shadows chasing each other over the wide-spread fields and woods; and look at the two village spires peeping above the trees of the grove.

Amy passed her favourite seat without stopping on her way down; but when she had delivered her note, and received an answer, and was on her way home, with a full hour before her, she thought there would be no harm in resting a while. She took the precaution to pin her handkerchief round the note, and put it in her pocket. And then sitting down on the mossy roots of a tree, she employed herself in observing the different shining insects that ran in and out of the moss, or danced upon the surface of the water; for to her all living creatures were objects of interest, from the squirrels and woodchucks she sometimes saw in her walks, to the caterpillars in the garden and the spiders round the kitchen door. First, she watched a party of ants carrying home some plunder; then her attention was fixed upon

some little insects that were dancing about all in one place, on the water of the brook, when a voice startled her, and, looking round, she saw Philly Clarke approaching her, with another girl, named Sally Baker, who lived in the village.

"There's Irish Amy, that lives at Mrs. Ryan's," said Philly to her companion. "I mean to have some fun with her."

Amy had risen, and started to walk on, when she saw the girls approaching; but Philly overtook her, and said, "Why, what's your hurry, Amy?"

"I must go home and take a note to Miss Lizzie," said Amy, still walking on.

"Well, well; but you need not walk so fast. You were lazy enough a minute ago. Do you think any one is going to hurt you? Who is the note from?"

Amy did not answer.

"It's from Miss King, I know," said Sally; "for I saw you go in there, and they are always writing notes. Mother says, Lizzie Ryan feels too grand to associate with any one but Squire King's girls. They are just right to go together."

"Mrs. Ryan is a right mean woman," said

Philly. "She is almost too stingy to live. Just think, Sally! She won't let any of us go in her garden for fear we shall steal something."

"That was because you got the apricots," said Amy, her face flushing with anger at the imputation on Mrs. Ryan.

"Just as though that was any thing! Just a few little mean things like them. She is a real mean woman, and my mother says so. Where's the note, Amy? Let us see it."

"It is in my pocket," said Amy; "but I shan't show it to you. And Miss Lizzie told me not to talk to you."

"Then you may just tell Miss Lizzie, that I am as good as she is, any day," said Philly, angrily; and seeing a corner of the note sticking out of Amy's pocket, she pulled it out, exclaiming, "Now then, I'll see it in spite of you, and you may help yourself, if you can."

Amy knew not what to do. She begged Philly to give her back the note, but Philly had now the power in her own hands, and determined to revenge herself; so she held it out of Amy's reach—now pretending to break it open, and now making a motion as if to throw it into the brook; while Amy cried and

entreated in vain. She had just made up her mind to give it up, and return to Miss Lizzie without it, when a new actor appeared upon the scene in the person of Mr. Ryan himself, who had walked up, and looked on a few moments without being seen.

“What is the matter, Amy?” said he at last.

“She has got my note,” said Amy, sobbing; “the one Miss Agatha gave me for Miss Lizzie, and she won’t give it to me.”

The two girls had started to run away, as soon as they saw Mr. Ryan; and Sally succeeded in making her escape, but he caught Philly and held her fast.

“I don’t care,” said Philly, angrily. “She had no business to talk to me so; she said I was a thief, and wouldn’t have any thing to do with me, and called me names besides.”

“I didn’t,” returned Amy. “I only said Miss Lizzie bid me not talk to you; and so she did.”

“You little story-teller!” exclaimed Philly.

“Hush!” said Mr. Ryan. “Give Amy her note.”

“There it is, then, and you’re welcome to it,” throwing it at her feet. “I should not have kept it at all, if you had not acted so.”

“What right had you to take it, to begin with?” asked Mr. Ryan.

“I only did it to plague her.”

“Take care you do not plague her again, then,” said Mr. Ryan, releasing her arm,—“unless you want to bring yourself into trouble. Run home now as fast as you can.”

“Will you please to tell Miss Lizzie that I did not get the note dirty, Mr. Ryan?” said Amy.

“Yes, child, I will. But I think she would be very apt to believe you, if you told her yourself. You are getting a character for telling the truth, don’t you know it?”

“I always try to,” said Amy, blushing with pleasure; “but sometimes I forget.”

“It will grow easier all the time, Amy. When you are tempted to tell a lie, and don’t do it, it makes it easier to avoid it the next time. You were quite brave about the caps this morning.”

“Miss Lizzie was so good-natured, it made me feel worse than if she had scolded me ever so hard,” said Amy. “I wish I could pay her for them. I thought I would ask you to sell my chickens next time you went into town, and buy some more caps for her.”

“But I thought you did not mean to sell your chickens till Christmas, Amy?” remarked Mr. Ryan.

“No more I didn’t,” answered Amy. “But then, I’d wish to pay Miss Lizzie—don’t you know?—and I haven’t got any thing else.”

“Well, Amy, I am glad you are so honest,” said Mr. Ryan. “But I think Miss Lizzie would rather you would not sell your chickens just now. She can make new caps more easily than you can get more chickens.”

Amy went into the kitchen, and found Mrs. Ryan and Lizzie engaged in getting tea ready. She produced her note and told her story.

“I am sorry you have had any quarrel with her,” said Mrs. Ryan. “She is not at all a good girl, and will be likely to make you trouble. But remember, Amy, whatever she does to you, you must return good for evil. Keep out of her way as much as you can, and, above all, don’t dispute with her.”

“I should not have disputed with her this afternoon,” said Amy, “only she got my note.”

“Very well,” said Mrs. Ryan. “Go and put away your bonnet, and get ready to set the table.”

At the tea-table, Mr. Ryan gave an account of Amy's adventure, and of her proposition to pay for the caps. Mrs. Ryan and Lizzie were much pleased, and even Miss Rachel allowed that it showed a proper disposition in the child. "To be sure," said she, in a qualifying tone, "she ought to improve, after we have taken so much pains with her."

Lizzie smiled rather mischievously at the "we," but made no remark. She was quite ready to concede to aunt Rachel all the credit of Amy's improvement, if it would only make her feel kindly toward the child. She would not allow Amy to sell her chickens, but she permitted her to do many services for her, even when it would have been less trouble to have performed the work herself. In this way both parties were benefited; for Amy acquired skill and quickness at the same time that she enjoyed the idea of serving Miss Lizzie, and Lizzie herself learned patience and forbearance, while directing the awkward attempts of her pupil at clear-starching and fine darning.

"Amy has done Lizzie full as much good as Lizzie has done her," remarked Mr. Ryan to his wife, one Sunday evening as they were walking slowly home from church, through

Amy's favourite lane. "Amy has taught her a great deal, while she has been learning her A, B, C."

"Lizzie is growing up well," answered Mrs. Ryan. "She improves very much in all respects. There is only one thing about her that troubles me."

"I trust that will be mended in time," remarked Mr. Ryan. "She is not without religious feelings—strong ones sometimes—and she is the child of many prayers. There are some things that are rather a disadvantage to her, I think."

"Do you allude to Rachel?" asked his wife.

Mr. Ryan nodded. "I cannot help thinking that Lizzie's state is more hopeful than her's," said he. "Lizzie, at least, does not deceive herself. She knows that she is not a Christian, while Rachel seems to fancy herself quite eminent for piety."

Mrs. Ryan sighed deeply. "I often feel very anxious about Rachel," said she; "but I do not know how to approach the subject with her. She is unwilling to think that she is wrong, of course. No doubt her many inconsistencies serve as a sort of excuse to Lizzie for neglecting the subject herself. Indeed, I

have heard her say as much. Still Lizzie has some Christian friends; and I think Agatha King's influence particularly good. Their being about of an age, gives more force to the example. But I often feel very much distressed about her. What a strong motive to consistency and a holy conversation is the thought, that the eternal welfare of those most dear to us may depend in some measure on our own conduct!"

Mr. Ryan thought within himself that his wife's life and conversation were in themselves a sufficient argument for the Christian religion. But he was rather awkward at expressing himself, so he was contented with thinking it, and began to talk of the sermon they had just heard.

Lizzie and Amy had fallen a good way behind their elders, as they loitered along, enjoying the sweet air, when Lizzie proposed that they should stop and rest awhile at the bridge. They seated themselves accordingly, and remained quite silent for some time.

"Miss Lizzie!" said Amy, finally, "don't it make you feel somehow like praying, when it is all so still and pleasant?"

"I don't know," said Lizzie, somewhat embarrassed by the question. "Does it you?"

“Yes, ma’am, sometimes. Sunday it almost always does, because I think how much pleasanter it is here than it was where I was before. It seems to be all Sunday here—the trees and woods and all. Sometimes it seems just like heaven; and at night the air is so cool and sweet, and——. Don’t you love to pray, Miss Lizzie?”

“No, Amy!” said Lizzie, gravely. “I hardly ever pray.”

Amy looked perfectly amazed and confounded. She did not know what to think. She was unwilling to believe that Miss Lizzie could do any thing wrong; and yet this declaration was at war with all she had learned at home and in the Sunday-school, since she came to Mrs. Ryan’s to live. At length she said, rather timidly, “Didn’t any one ever teach you, Miss Lizzie?”

“Yes, Amy; I was taught enough about it, if that were all.”

“My teacher in Sunday-school says we cannot go to heaven unless we love to pray,” continued Amy. “Don’t you want to go there, Miss Lizzie?”

“What made you love to pray at first, Amy?” said Lizzie, evading the question.

“Because your mother wanted me to,” replied Amy; “and she was so good, I wanted to do all she told me. And then she said that God was good to me too, and made me come here. He put it into the hearts of good persons to be kind to us poor people, and try to make us better; and that made me love him. Then she told me about Jesus Christ; and afterward I read about him in the Testament, and that made me love him more yet. I don’t see how you can help it, Miss Lizzie, when he was always so good to you.”

Lizzie did not answer; and Amy, peeping round into her bonnet, to find out the reason, was quite alarmed to see tears falling from her eyes. She was ignorant of what she had said to trouble her, and afraid to say more lest she should add to the trouble. Presently Lizzie arose, and wiping her eyes, turned toward her; then Amy ventured to say:—

“Have I done wrong, Miss Lizzie? I didn’t mean to do it.”

“No, Amy. You are a very good girl. I hope you will always be as good as you are now. But we must hasten home, or they will wonder what has become of us.”

Amy felt quite troubled about Miss Lizzie

all the rest of the day, but not so much as Miss Lizzie did about herself. Amy's simple question—"Don't you want to go to heaven?"—seemed to ring in her ears; for, strange as it may seem, she had never thought of the possibility of her going anywhere else. She had always cherished the idea that she should be saved somehow or other, though she did not know how. Now, however, she began anxiously to consider how she was to reach heaven. She had been too well taught to dream of earning salvation, and she knew that she had no right to expect to be saved so long as her whole life was opposed to the law of God.

"How blind I have been!" she thought. "I have said in all my actions, like the people in the Scriptures, that I would not have this man to rule over me; and yet I have expected him to save me! God has not only not been in all my thoughts, but every day and hour I have wilfully disobeyed him, and done what he does not approve. Yes, I have set Jehovah at defiance. I have refused to listen to the calls of the Holy Spirit, and that again and again; and yet I have been living quietly, hoping it would all come right at last. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or

three witnesses. But what must I expect, who have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace? What can I expect at last, but to hear the Judge say, 'Depart from me, ye cursed?'

Amy's questions had raised a storm in Lizzie's breast, which all her efforts could not quell. Conscience, long restrained and silenced, now arose in terrible majesty, and would be heard. The hail had swept away the refuges of lies, and there was no more of crying, "Peace, peace." She must needs hear, whether she would or no.

In vain did she look over her past life to find some satisfying period. All was dark. The very best of her actions was polluted with sin, in the light which now beamed upon her. Miserable as she was, however, she would not—strange to say—have exchanged her present distress for her former indifference, even if it had been in her power. She passed a sleepless night, and arose in the morning no less wretched. Her mental agitation had brought on a severe nervous headache, under which she sometimes suffered. Lizzie never complained of these headaches as long as she could help it; and it was only by

her sickly countenance and her inability, that her mother could tell how much she was suffering. Mrs. Ryan would then at once send her to bed, where Lizzie would lie for hours, with her face pressed upon the pillow, tortured by every ray of light, and unwilling to have any one in the room, because the least noise disturbed her.

“Are you sick this morning, my daughter?” asked Mr. Ryan, at breakfast.

“My head aches, father, but I am not sick,” answered Lizzie.

“You were sitting up so late reading last night,” said aunt Rachel. “I knew you would be sick to-day; for I heard you up long after I had gone to bed.”

“I was not reading,” said Lizzie, shortly.

“Well, writing, then. That is just as bad.”

“You should not write at night, my dear,” said her mother, anxiously. “You will settle your headaches permanently, unless you are more careful.”

“I was not writing, nor using my eyes at all, mother. I could not sleep, and so I sat up.”

“Will you have any thing done for your head?”

“It is not so bad as it is sometimes, mother. I think it will be better when I move about a little.”

“I am afraid not, Lizzie. Moving about does not seem to answer much purpose for your headaches. Had you not better lie down at once?”

“No, mother; not yet. I will lie down presently, if it is not better.”

Lizzie kept up as long as she could, for she dreaded being left alone with her own thoughts. But she was finally obliged to give up to the intense pain, and retire to her own room. Then the conflict began afresh, with a force to which that of the last night seemed tame. The terrors of the Lord compassed her round about; the most fearful visions of death and judgment passed before her. She dreaded the grave as she had never done before, as she pictured to herself the great tribunal—the Judge—the final sentence—and the separation from all whom she held most dear. Not a ray of light pierced the awful gloom. She could see no hope—no mercy-seat—no blessed Saviour—nought but judgment and fiery indignation; and she groaned and wept in the bitterness of her soul, as she had never done in her life from bodily pain.

“Is your head so very bad?” said her mother, entering the room, and alarmed at the state in which she found her;—for, as we have said, Lizzie was not given to complaint.

“I don’t know—my head is not the worst. Oh! mother, mother, must I be lost? Is there no hope for me?”

Mrs. Ryan was startled; for she thought her mind was disordered by her headache.

“Lost! my love? I trust not. What are you thinking of? What makes you talk so?”

Lizzie had never been accustomed to have a thought hidden from her parents; and now, with sobs and tears, she told all her distress, and poured out her soul into her mother’s bosom. Mrs. Ryan was greatly moved, and wept with her.

“No one need be lost, my child, who does not wilfully refuse to be saved.”

“That is just what I have done all my life,” said Lizzie. “You and my father have prayed for me and taught me, and so have my teachers. God has given me many mercies, and I know the Holy Spirit has warned me more than once; and yet I have refused it all. Oh, can there be hope for me?”

“Lizzie,” said Mrs. Ryan, “do you remember the thief upon the cross? Do you remember Saul, the persecutor? ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ ‘The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.’ ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’”

Lizzie listened almost with wonder to the simple words she had so often heard before. “But, mother, I have refused him so long, that I fear he has left me to myself, and I dare not come to him now.”

“He would hardly visit you with such convictions of sin if he had left you to yourself. Cannot you trust your Saviour, Lizzie?”

“If I were not such a sinner, mother! But how can I come to him, when I have insulted him so many times? It seems almost as if I had crucified him myself, when I think how I have despised his goodness. Oh, mother, mother, what shall I do?”

“‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,’” said Mrs. Ryan, solemnly. “You say you have insulted your

Saviour, and I do not doubt it; but, Lizzie, if you have insulted him, do not repeat the offence by distrusting him now. He waits to be gracious. Why not come at once to him?"

Lizzie did not yet see her way clearly, but she felt somewhat soothed by her mother's words and the precious promises she had repeated. It seemed as if her case were not altogether hopeless. Yet it was many, many days before her mind became clear, or settled again. Her past sins stared her in the face, and often seemed to hide heaven altogether from her view; and at such times she found it hard to believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. She prayed earnestly and often, yet many times without finding any comfort; but soon she began to love prayer, and to feel as if she had a Father above. She became calm by degrees, and experienced the blessed satisfaction of a soul new-born unto righteousness—a satisfaction that no one knoweth, save he that hath it!

CHAPTER V.

THE winter passed quietly and pleasantly at the farm, and Amy almost forgot that she had ever had any other home. She sold her chickens to great advantage; and, as Miss Lizzie would not listen to her entreaties to be allowed to pay her for the spoiled caps, she laid out the money, under Mrs. Ryan's direction, in clothing for her little brother. Mrs. Ryan allowed her time to make it, and showed her how to do it in the best manner; and when they were done, her husband took them into town to Mrs. Kelly, together with a nice thick calico dress for herself, which Amy had also purchased. Mrs. Kelly did not receive these tokens of Amy's remembrance without murmuring.

"Sure, she might have thrust her own mother to lay it out for meself—even if she didn't stir a fut to come and see us. But it's an ungrateful child she is, and always was."

"I should think you might be obliged to her for spending her money for you at all, instead of quarrelling with her," remarked Mr. Ryan.

"Is it meself obliged to her?" exclaimed

Biddy Kelly, in a tone of the greatest astonishment. "Sure isn't her born-duty to work for her mother, and me doing all I have for her? I'd like to see meself obliged to her!"

"I'm obliged to her, any way," spoke up Johnny. "She's a rale good girl, and a dale better than yourself, mother."

Mrs. Kelly caught up a *two*-legged stool, which she hurled after her hopeful son, but without hitting him, as he ran out of the door, and round the corner of the house.

"Ye little villain, Johnny Kelly! Just let me catch ye, and see what ye'll get!" adding a variety of undesirable epithets.

Johnny, however, did not seem inclined to try the experiment; and Mr. Ryan took his leave of the amiable Mrs. Kelly, wondering how the child of such a mother could have any capacity left for good. Johnny was at the corner, waiting to speak to him as he came out.

"Would you plaze tell Amy, sir, that I thank her for the clothes, and it's glad I am that she is with dacent people, and learning to be dacent herself."

"I will be sure to tell her," said Mr. Ryan; "but would not you like to be decent yourself, Johnny?"

“That I should,” said Johnny; “but where’s the use, when I am living with the likes of her?”—pointing round the corner. “I asked her once, might I go and live in the country, like Amy?—but she wouldn’t let me. I mean to run away sometime, and never come back no more.”

Mr. Ryan was a good deal puzzled how to treat this frank declaration; for it seemed vain to talk to a child, in such a situation, about honouring his parents, and almost cruel to tell him that he must not run away from the only home he knew any thing about. So he contented himself with bidding him, in general terms, to be as good as he could, and go to Sunday-school now he had some decent garments: and giving him a sixpence and his pockets full of apples, he left him, crying with all his might to go and see Amy. He did not tell Amy of the ungracious manner in which her gifts had been received by her mother; but he repeated Johnny’s message, which cost Amy many tears.

“It’s a kind-hearted child he is, Mr. Ryan; but how can he be good, when he sees nothing but wickedness around him from morning till night? You will hardly believe it, ma’am,

but I've seen that child almost tipsy, and younger than he! There is a girl next door, only five years old, that will drink whisky like you would new milk."

"Did you ever drink any thing yourself, Amy?"

"I don't remember of drinking but once, ma'am, and then it made me very sick, and that turned me against it; but many's the time my mother has pounded me because I wouldn't. It is more that than any thing that makes them so bad."

"I think you are right there, Amy; and I hope that some time we shall have a law to keep such people from getting liquor at all. In the mean time, we must do all we can for the poor people, and not be discouraged when we meet with hindrances."

Christmas was a very happy time to Amy. She employed all her spare moments for two or three weeks beforehand, in preparing, with Miss Lizzie's advice and assistance, some simple gifts for Mr. and Mrs. Ryan, and Miss Rachel: and she enjoyed presenting these gifts exceedingly. Then she had a number of presents herself—a new Bible from Miss Lizzie, a nice muslin-de-laine dress and new woollen shawl

from Mr. and Mrs. Ryan, a pretty book from her Sunday-school teacher, and another from Miss Agatha King, and a basket from Miss Rachel. After tea, she went down to the village to see her Sunday-school teacher, Mrs. Andrews, who had invited all her class to a little children's party, and enjoyed herself very much. When Amy first entered the class, the other girls had decidedly shrunk from her, and there was quite a disposition among some of them to make their contempt manifest. Mrs. Andrews observed the feeling, and one day, when Amy was absent, she spoke of it to the class, representing to them the cruelty and injustice of such conduct. "You do not know that any of you are better in the sight of God than Amy, and I fear some of you are not as pleasing in his sight. Amy tries very hard to learn; she is punctual and attentive, and very much interested in all she hears; and I have never yet had the least occasion to reprove her. As for your having more respectable parents and friends, and more education, you have no more reason to be proud of that, than she has of the pretty new dress she wore last Sunday."

"She would be very foolish to be proud of

that," remarked Helen Searle, "for Mrs. Ryan gave it to her."

"And who gave you all, upon which you pride yourself, Helen? Who gave you your friends, your father and mother, and pleasant home? Whose kindness is it that you are not a little beggar, going about in rags? Who gave you all you have?"

Helen did not answer, but one of the other girls said, "God."

"Right, Matilda! and is it right to make God's gifts to us a reason for despising others?"

"But, Mrs. Andrews," said Matilda, "such girls are often very bad; they steal, and tell lies, and do every thing bad."

"Is that a good reason for treating them with contempt, Matilda?"

"Why, yes! I thought we ought to despise wicked people."

"Indeed! Where do you find that rule? Surely not in your Bible, I think. Whom did Jesus Christ come into the world to save?"

"Sinners," said Martha Kidd.

"All sorts of sinners, or only sinners that are not very bad? Sinners in streets and alleys, and poor, low places, or only those that live in nice houses, and go well dressed? When

the rich man in the parable made a great supper, he invited not only the well dressed and respectable, but the poor, the maimed, and the blind. He called them in from highways and hedges. Christ himself received and treated with tenderness the very worst of sinners. He suffered and died for all—rich and poor, honoured and despised; and surely if he saw fit to lay aside his heavenly glory, and humble himself to death, even the death of the cross, for this poor child, we, who are as much dependent on his mercies as she is, have no right to look down on her.”

Mrs. Andrews said no more, perceiving from the tearful eyes and downcast looks of some of the class, that her words had produced the effect she wished. She had no further occasion to notice this fault: the girls all began to wish to help Amy, and to take an interest in her; and she became, by degrees, quite a pet among them, so that when she arrived at Mrs. Andrews’s on Christmas evening, she found them all ready to welcome her, and she entered with spirit into what was going on. She had played several games of blindman’s buff, and now, being blindman herself, she was pursuing her companions, when her foot came in contact

with a cricket incautiously left in the way, and she fell, striking her head with great violence on the edge of the stone mantel-piece. There was a general exclamation of distress, and Mrs. Andrews hastened to raise her. She was quite insensible, and for a moment Mrs. Andrews herself thought she was dead. The girls gathered around her, crying and lamenting. Mrs. Andrews soon recovered her presence of mind, and, despatching a messenger for the doctor in all haste, she sent all the children into the other room, with a charge to be very quiet; and, closing the doors, employed herself, with Lizzie Ryan's assistance, in loosening Amy's clothes and endeavouring to recall her to consciousness. Amy breathed very faintly, but gave no other sign of life, and when Dr. Searle came he shook his head and looked very grave. They continued to use all possible means for her restoration, however, and in about half an hour the little girl breathed more freely and half opened her eyes, but she recognised no one, and did not seem to hear what was said to her.

"How shall we take her home?" asked Mr. Ryan, who, with his wife, had arrived almost as soon as the doctor.

“She must not be moved on any account,” said Dr. Searle, “not even from one room to another, to-night; the only hope for her life is in the most perfect quiet. You had better send the children home at once, Mrs. Andrews, and have every thing as still as possible. I shall remain here awhile to take advantage of any favourable change.”

When Mrs. Andrews entered the other room there was no occasion to tell the children to be quiet; they would not have spoken above their breath for any consideration. With many sighs and tears, they prepared to go home from the party from which they had anticipated so much pleasure; and I venture to say, the most thoughtless among them did not lay her head upon her pillow that night without a prayer.

For many days Amy's life seemed to hang by a hair. She showed no sign of consciousness, except by swallowing what was put into her mouth, and now and then a faint sigh. Dr. Searle said that he must have advice, and begged Mr. Ryan to send to the city for a physician, which was no sooner said than done, and he arrived that very afternoon. As soon as he had examined the child, he pronounced an operation necessary, and proposed to

perform it at once. Mrs. Ryan sent Lizzie up-stairs to be out of the way, while she herself waited in the next room with Mrs. Andrews, to be at hand, and get whatever might be necessary. Oh, how long the time appeared to Lizzie! She walked up and down the room, listened to the footsteps below, or threw herself on her knees in prayer for the child who had been so dear to her. At last, after what seemed an age of suspense, she heard her mother's foot upon the stair, and would have opened the door, but felt as if she had not the strength to reach it. Mrs. Ryan's face at once proclaimed good news. "She has spoken, and is perfectly sensible, my dear. Dr. W. says there is little, if any more danger."

Lizzie tried to answer, but quiet as she usually was, her self-command now gave way, and she burst into tears. "Come, come, my child, I want you to go home, and send down some clean clothes for Amy, and my thick wrapper, and see that things are comfortable for your father. Dr. Searle is here, and will take you up in his carriage."

Lizzie prepared for her ride with a thankful heart, and announced the news to her aunt as soon as she got home. But Miss Rachel was

not in a very good humour : she could hardly forgive Amy, in fact, for making herself an object of so much interest and consequence. She might have overlooked this fault if the child had died, perhaps, but she could not excuse her for getting well ; so when Lizzie burst into the parlour to say that Amy was almost out of danger, Miss Rachel only replied,

“ Don’t, pray, make such a noise, Lizzie ! I am sure my head aches hard enough now ; but, of course, that is of no consequence. I never thought she was in any danger myself ; such children are not so easily hurt. I suppose if I should have ever so bad a fall, Dr. Searle would be thought good enough for me.”

Lizzie was for a moment very angry, but she did not reply, for she had learned to bridle her tongue, and to bear her aunt’s peevishness in silence ; but Dr. Searle, who had followed her into the room, could not resist the temptation to retort,

“ On the contrary, Miss Ward,” said he, “ if you will break your head at once, I faithfully promise to hand you over to Dr. W.’s care immediately. And, moreover, my carriage is at the door, with a gay young horse, and if you

will only get in, I will engage to put your skull in a condition for any amount of repairs, in the course of ten minutes.’’

Miss Rachel looked contemptuously indignant, but she stood a good deal in awe of the doctor, so she made no other reply.

In a week or two, Amy was well enough to be carried home on a mattress, laid in Mr. Ryan’s easy wagon. How glad she was to get home, and how natural, yet how strange, every thing looked! When she was carried into the back parlour, and laid on a little bed that had been prepared for her there, it seemed to her that she had been away on a very long journey. She could remember the party and her fall, and she had some faint idea of seeing Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Andrews about her afterward, once or twice; but the rest was all a blank, till she was aroused by something hurting her head very much, and she seemed to awake from an uneasy sleep, to find Mr. Ryan holding her hands, and the two doctors fastening bandages around her head.

It was a long time before she could bear any conversation, or much light in the room, and still longer before she was able to talk; and there she lay, almost without speaking or

moving, for two or three weeks, very quiet and very happy. She did not now suffer much pain. Mrs. Ryan or Miss Lizzie was almost always beside her, ready to read to her or talk to her when she could bear it; and when she did not feel able to speak, she could lie with her eyes closed, thinking over the hymns and verses she had learned since she came to Mrs. Ryan's.

One afternoon she had been quite silent for almost an hour, and Lizzie, who was sitting by the bedside, thought she was asleep. Lizzie's own mind was running back over her past life. She could hardly make herself believe that she was the same person who, one year before, had been so careless, and not only careless,—so utterly opposed to all she now held dear. For Lizzie's mind had been, before her conversion, more than indifferent to spiritual things—she had disliked the subject extremely. There were several of her religious friends whom she was obliged, almost against her will, to respect and love. Her father and mother were, of course, among the number: she could see nothing wrong in them. Mr. Addison, the minister, she was forced to allow to be an excellent man, though he did

use a very white handkerchief, and wrote the notices he gave out on Sunday in a little, black morocco book, instead of a slip of paper. Miss Hyatt was very good too, perhaps a little better than was needful; still she was no doubt really a Christian, and so was Mrs. Andrews; and this finished the list. The rest were no better, that she could see, for being professing Christians. Though she was not unamiable, she really rejoiced when she saw any member of the church walking inconsistently; and, as we have seen, she did not have to go far from home to find an instance of this kind.

It was a great blow to Lizzie when her friend and companion in all things, Agatha King, took a decidedly religious stand. She dared not use her influence against it, reckless as she was at this time; but she told Agatha that she was sure they should never have any more comfort together. "You think it will not make any difference, Agatha, but you will see. Before long you will come to look upon me as a perfect heathen, and all our interests will be different. We had better give up our friendship at once, for it will certainly die a natural death, if we do not."

But Agatha had no idea of being given up

by Lizzie, and she persisted in meeting with kindness and gentleness Lizzie's frequent sarcasms and fits of coldness, until she won her back again, and forced her to confess that she was not spoiled by being religious. She was even brought to have a general intention of taking the same course herself some time or other.

Lizzie was thinking about all these past feelings of hers, and in what a different aspect life now appeared to her, having a great object to live for—to glorify God by well-doing, and to be useful in the church and in the world; and she had almost forgotten Amy, till she spoke.

“You don't look as you used to, when I first came here, Miss Lizzie!”

“You think not, Amy?” said Lizzie, smiling, and rousing herself from her revery, to answer the sick child. “I have not grown ugly, I hope?”

“Oh no! You look as well as you used to, and I wouldn't have you look any better, if you could.” Amy made this assertion with great gravity, as if she were stating a fact not to be questioned for an instant; and, indeed, it is doubtful if the idea ever struck her, that any

one could be prettier than Miss Lizzie. "It is not that," she continued; "but you look somehow different. I don't mean that you were not always good to me, Miss Lizzie," pursued the child; "but sometimes I used to think that you liked to tease other people, and make fun of what they liked; and if you did not say it, you looked it. You don't do so now."

"I hope not, indeed, Amy," said Lizzie, gravely.

"And that's what I mean by your looking different. You seem so settled like,—so quiet;—just like your mother. I guess you do like to pray sometimes now, Miss Lizzie?"

"Yes, Amy, I do indeed. You do not know how much good you have done me, Amy."

"Me! Miss Lizzie?"

"Yes, Amy, your own little self; and whatever I have taught you, you have taught me much more. I assure you that I am very much obliged to you."

Amy looked pleased, and puzzled at the same time. "I don't see how I could teach you. I didn't know nothing. I mean I didn't know any thing when I first came here; and you used to teach me my letters. Don't you

remember how long it was before I could tell p from q, and b from d?"

"And when I was teaching you the difference, and how to spell spla, by making you spell la, and then pla, and then spla, I was learning patience and exactness myself; and when I saw you so anxious to learn, and so thankful to be taught, even a little, it made me ashamed of being so indifferent to my own advantages, and so ungrateful for all my blessings."

"I hope I'll never have to go back again," said Amy, after some minutes' silence.

"What made you think of that?" asked Lizzie, surprised.

"I dreamed about it last night. I mostly dream of it, when I am not feeling well, or tired. I don't know what would become of me, if I had to go back."

"I hope that will never happen, Amy."

"But couldn't they take me back if they wanted to? If my step-father should come after me, wouldn't I have to go?" Amy raised herself in bed, and her pale cheeks became crimson with excitement, as she asked the question.

"I do not know, but I should think not,"

said Lizzie. "I would not talk or think about it now, if I were you. You will make your head ache again; and it is not right nor wise to borrow trouble. You are safe for the present. I think now you had better lie down, and try to sleep a while."

At tea-time, Lizzie asked the same question of her father that Amy had put to her.

"I don't know, indeed," said Mr. Ryan thoughtfully. "I suppose they could, if they were bent on it."

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Mrs. Ryan and Lizzie together.

"Why, you see," he continued, "I have really no legal hold upon the child. They would not consent to bind her themselves, and they do not happen to be receiving any assistance from the town."

"But the guardians of the poor bind children," said Mrs. Ryan; "for they would have bound Peggy Rice."

"Oh, yes, because her parents were then in the poor-house. If Kelly and his wife should die, or one of them be disabled, so as to be sent there, then they would have authority over the children."

"One is almost tempted to wish that some-

thing would happen to them," said Lizzie: "it would be so much better for the poor children."

"That would not be right," said Mr. Ryan. "The only thing we can hope is, that they will be content to let her alone. I cannot endure for a moment the thought of her being taken away from us, now that she has learned our ways. She would never live through it."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Miss Rachel. "Don't you suppose she would go back again to her old ways after a little while? It might be rather hard at first; but, after all, it is her very nature. I am very glad she is not bound, for my part, as it makes it all the easier to get rid of her, if it seems desirable."

"I have no desire to get rid of her," answered Mrs. Ryan, rather quickly.

"I do not know what you mean to do with her," said aunt Rachel. "I do not see that she has grown any stronger for three weeks; and likely enough she will never be able to use her limbs again. There was old Mrs. Bennett, who had a fall like Amy's twenty years ago, and she has never walked a step since. What

would you do, if Amy's should turn out such a case?"

"What did Mrs. Barnett's family do with her?" inquired Mr. Ryan with great gravity.

"What a ridiculous question, Mr. Ryan! They kept her, and took care of her, of course; but I conclude you would not consider yourself bound to do the same by this little Irish creature?"

"You make a great point of her being Irish," interrupted Mrs. Ryan. "I wonder you ever consented to have an Irish grandfather yourself, you dislike the Irish so much!"

"She did not have the ordering of her grandfather, I suppose," said Mr. Ryan. "But, to answer your question by another, Rachel, how should you like to be treated yourself if you became helpless—turned out into the street, or, at best, sent to the poor-house, or kept and taken care of?"

"I never saw any thing like you to-night, Mr. Ryan! I should like to be cared for, of course; but——"

"Then you are answered, my dear sister, and from the best authority, since 'what you would have others do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.'"

CHAPTER VI.

AUNT RACHEL'S prophecy did not prove true; for, in a week or two, Amy began to improve very rapidly, and by the end of March she was well, and strong as ever. She enjoyed very much the first coming on of spring. It was Amy who found the first crocus peeping above ground, and the first liverwort and ground-laurel in the grove down by the brook. Amy heard the first robin, and saw the first butterfly. She plucked some blue violets in a warm corner of the yard before any one else had thought of looking for them. Mrs. Ryan gave her a long sunny border, well stocked with pinks, myrtle, snapdragons, London pride, sweet-basil, and other common flowers, for her own garden; and Mr. Ryan provided her with flower seeds. This border was her undisputed territory. No one was to gather a flower there without her permission; and she was allowed to give away as many bouquets as she chose. No gentleman, with his splendid gardens, and conservatories, and greenhouses, covering acres of ground, ever

felt richer or prouder than Amy with her little garden. No great Victoria lily was watched more anxiously than Amy watched her parrot-tulip; and, when her seeds began to come up in light-green rings, round their label-sticks, she was as happy a gardener as ever lived.

One day, Dr. W., who had been sent for to visit some very sick person in the village, dined at Mr. Ryan's. He asked after Amy, and had a good deal of conversation with her about her head, her chickens, and her garden; and Amy gathered some of her choicest flowers to make him a bouquet when he went away. The good-natured doctor was much pleased. "I am coming out again in a day or two, Amy, and, if I have time, I shall come and see your garden."

True to his word, Dr. W. not only came to see the garden, but he also presented Amy with three beautiful verbenas,—a scarlet, a purple and a white one,—all growing well, and covered with buds.

Amy was inexpressibly happy. She had been left so long undisturbed, that she had quite dismissed from her mind all those fears of going back, which had so troubled her at first; and she had come to regard the Ryan

farm as her home, and the Ryan family as her family. Mrs. Ryan, though she kept her pretty busy and governed her completely, was very indulgent to her tastes, and showed her appreciation of her sense and judgment, by frequently consulting her upon subjects to which she wished to direct her thoughts. As for Mr. Ryan, Amy regarded him as the greatest man in the world—greater even than Mr. Addison, the minister; and she looked up to him with affection, mingled with awe. Aunt Rachel, if she did not like her, had learned to tolerate her. But it was upon Miss Lizzie that Amy poured out her affection without stint or measure. Miss Lizzie was, in her eyes, the personification of every thing that was good, beautiful and wise. Her drawings were, in Amy's eyes, wonders of art; and the excellence of her playing and singing, words could not express. One day, Miss Hyatt, who was a very accomplished musician, was at Mrs. Ryan's. Lizzie was in the next room, practising. "Lizzie is going to excel in music, is she not?" said Miss Hyatt. "She really plays and sings very well for a girl of her age."

Mrs. Ryan assented quietly to the remark; but Amy, who chanced to be in the room, was

very indignant at it. Respect for Mrs. Ryan and her visitor, of course, prevented her from expressing any opinion before them, but she poured out her anger to Jane, who had returned home on a visit.

AMY had now been at Mrs. Ryan's about a year. She was standing one day by the sink in the kitchen, washing the vegetables for dinner, when she heard her name called. The sound was strange, and yet familiar. She turned round suddenly, and there, at the door, stood her step-father! She turned as pale as ashes, and her first impulse was to run away; but, recollecting herself, she handed him a chair, and asked him how he did, and how her mother was.

"She is well enough, only for the hate," answered Kelly. "Your mother does be fretting for you day and night, and I've come for you to come home, and help a bit."

"Oh, I can't—I won't go home!" exclaimed Amy in horror.

"Ye won't indade, miss! And what will hinder ye? Sure ye've lived with grand folks till you've forgot your manners. I tell ye,

your mother manes to have ye at home, where she can get something for your work, and not be losing your time here, earning nothing, only being set up above your own folks."

Mr. Ryan had just come in from the barn, and, hearing a strange voice, entered the kitchen. Amy flew to him, and clasping his arm, said, in a voice almost suffocated, with distress and terror:

"Oh, Mr. Ryan, he has come to take me away! Oh, don't let him have me! Oh, what shall I do?"

As soon as he saw the man, Mr. Ryan guessed the cause of the poor girl's agitation. He applied himself to soothing her; and as soon as he had in some measure succeeded, he turned to Kelly, and asked him calmly, "who he was, and what he wanted."

"It's the girl's father, I am, sir,—any way, her mother's husband; and I have come to take her home, for her mother can't want her no longer."

"But," said Mr. Ryan, "I thought you promised never to interfere with her as long as she was here. You agreed to let her alone."

"And what if we did?" returned the man. "I don't care what was said. The long and

the short of it is, the girl has got to come home !”

“But what possible motive can you have for wishing to disturb her now that she is well off, and learning so much that will be useful to her? How could she be better off than she is? She is improving all the time, and has a good home and good care. What can you want more?”

“I want her where she can help the family,” answered Joe, “instead of being brought up a fine lady, and despising her own folks. I’ve no notion of children knowing more than their parents. The priest says it’s the crying sin of the age, setting people above the station in which God has placed them; and these are the very words he spoke: ‘Ye’ll bring her up a heretic too, and lose her soul.’”

“You cannot surely think,” said Mr. Ryan, “that the child’s soul will be any safer in such a place as yours, and with the company you keep, than here?”

“Indade, and I do then; for the priest says we have faith, if we haven’t any thing else. And as for the place and the company, if it’s good enough for us, it’s good enough for her. We always lived there, and why shouldn’t she?”

Mr. Ryan talked with Kelly for a long time, using all his powers of eloquence to persuade him to let Amy remain where she was, but in vain. He was determined, and that was the end of it. Perplexed and distressed, he left him at last to eat some dinner, and went into his wife's room, where Amy had taken refuge. She had thrown herself on the floor, with her head in Mrs. Ryan's lap, and was convulsed with terror. Mrs. Ryan, hardly less agitated, was trying to soothe her; and Lizzie leaned on the back of her mother's chair, crying bitterly. Mr. Ryan stood regarding them for a few minutes in silence; then commanding his voice as well as he could, he proposed to ask God's direction.

Lizzie fell on her knees beside her mother. Amy did not stir, but her sobs became less and less frequent; and when the prayer for guidance and comfort was ended, she was comparatively calm.

"What can we do, father?" said Mrs. Ryan presently. "We cannot let her go!"

"We won't let her, at any rate," interposed Lizzie.

"I wish we could not, indeed," said her father; "but I am afraid there is no way to

prevent it. Her father seems determined to carry out the matter; and he has the power in his hands. If she were two years older it would make a difference; she could then go to the authorities and ask to be apprenticed: but now she can do nothing. I wish I could see King about it. I believe I will ride down to the village. I will not be long gone, and will persuade Kelly to stay till I come back."

Lizzie watched in breathless suspense for her father's return. But as soon as she caught the first glimpse of his face, she felt sure that he had no good news; and so it proved.

"Mr. King says the law is on their side," said he. "Unless we can persuade him out of it, we shall have to give her up."

"I can't, I can't go back," said Amy. "I'd rather you would kill me right off. I wish I had died last winter. I wish I was dead now!"

"Amy! Amy! my dear, you must not talk so. God knows what is best for you,—better than we do."

"I'm sure he does not care for me," sobbed the poor child. "He would never let me go back to that place any more, if he did. I'm sure he don't love me!"

“Don’t you remember the verses you learned last Sunday? God does love you; and as long as you love him, he will take care of you.”

“It don’t seem as if God was in such places, Mrs. Ryan.”

“He is there as much as he is here, Amy; and he ‘will never leave you, nor forsake you.’ No, my poor child. You must trust in him.”

“I will, if I can,” said Amy. “But, oh! how can I go back there again? There’s only one room, Mrs. Ryan, no larger than the pantry; and they all sleep there, and eat there, and all. And it is all full of cockroaches, and bugs, and worms: and, oh, it is such an awful place! They get drunk, and fight, and beat one another. Oh, how can I stay there? You don’t know what a horrid women come there. There’s that Judy Dean, with her baby, not six weeks old. I saw her go out of our house, and fall down close by the water, dead drunk, and lie there for an hour, with her little baby crawling over her neck in the mud and rain. Poor little thing! There is not a pig on this farm that don’t live more like decent people than they do.”

“You must not let them get your Bible away, Amy,” said Lizzie.

“I don’t know how I shall keep it, or any thing else,” replied Amy. “I expect they’ll get every thing away from me, if they are like what they used to be. There is never a place to keep any thing safe about the house; and if I had a box to lock, it would do no good, only make them mad at me. They can’t take away from me what I have learned, that’s one thing.”

“There are a great many things that they cannot take away, my poor child,” said Mrs. Ryan. “They can never deprive you of the love and favour of God, and they cannot keep you from praying. The same God that hears you here, will hear you there; and you will need to seek him as you have never done before. Perhaps, my dear, you may be able to do some good among the poor people. It may be that you can teach your little brother some of the things that you have learned yourself, and so give them a chance of growing up better. Just think how glad you would be, if your going home should be the means of making some of them seek and serve God.”

“I should be almost willing to go for that,” said Amy, her countenance brightening a little; “for I love my little brother dearly,

and my mother too, if she'd only let me; but I'm afraid I couldn't do any thing. It is not so easy to do people good in such places. They can't be good hardly. But I'll try it, if I have to go. Oh dear! oh dear! How can I go away from this good home, and never, never see you again!"

Amy abandoned herself again to her distress, and Lizzie wept with her. As soon as she could command her voice, Mrs. Ryan said:

"Never is a long time, Amy. You know, even if we do not get you back before, you can come back when you are free, if we all live so long; and if we do not, my child, we shall surely meet again in another and a better world. There will be no going away from that home, Amy. 'There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' We can look forward to that time with confidence and new hope, and no man can take it from us."

Mr. Ryan now returned to say that Kelly had gone. He would not consent to have Amy remain, on any terms, longer than till Monday, (it being now Friday;) and he declared, with an oath, that if she was not forthcoming then, he would come after her with a constable. Mr.

Ryan was obliged to promise faithfully to bring her in on Monday morning, before he could obtain even this brief respite. Brief as it was, it was something, and Amy felt herself relieved by it. She tried not to think of what was coming, but clung to Mrs. Ryan and Miss Lizzie every moment, as if she were afraid of being snatched from them unawares. When night came, she could hardly endure to leave them; and, as she entered her little bedroom, and looked around upon the plain, neat furniture, her little clean bed, and the dear low window, from which she had so often watched the moon shining on the river—thinking that she had but three nights more to sleep there, her young heart was burdened. She set down her candle—for she was trusted with a candle now—and tried to read her Bible; but she could not see through her tears, so she laid it down, and turned to prayer. But as she kneeled down by her bed, all the misery, the apparent hopelessness of her lot came over her like a dark cloud. She could see no light upon her opening way.

But this mood of despair did not last long. Amy's age and natural temperament were in her favour; and she had learned, child as she was,

to rest with perfect and simple faith on the promises of God in his word. As she kneeled, or rather crouched on the floor, utterly overwhelmed and bowed down by the prospect before her, unable to speak, or even to think, a voice seemed to arise in the very inmost depths of her soul—a voice which was not that of her own thoughts or hopes, but which seemed to come from some strange distance—and it said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father! Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered! In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer! I have overcome the world. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!” And Amy knew the voice, and who it was that spoke to her; and she went and laid her heavy burden at His feet, and the Good Shepherd that gathers the young lambs in his arms, took the forlorn child to his bosom. So she was comforted, and despaired no more.

We pass over the two sorrowful days that

yet remained to Amy in her happy home. They slipped away all too quickly; and Monday morning came. She arose very early, and visited all her favourite places, confiding her pets to the care of Mrs. Ryan and Lizzie, with many tears. Mrs. Ryan had packed her clothes, and concealed in a safe place a little sum of money, which she knew she could trust Amy to use with discretion; and Lizzie had given her a little Testament, which she could keep in her pocket, as she seemed to have some fear of losing her large Bible. Lizzie helped about every thing, and received Amy's commissions almost in silence, for she felt that she could not trust herself to speak.

Delay as they might, the time came at last when it was necessary for them to set out, and Amy went round last of all to bid good-bye to her dear flowers. She had tended and watered them till they seemed almost a part of herself; and she bent down to one and another, and actually kissed them, as if they had been living creatures.

"The leaves of my parrot-tulip have almost died down," said she. "I shall not watch for it to come up next spring. How full of buds the verbenas are! I should like to have Mrs.

Andrews get a bunch of them when they are out full."

Lizzie nodded assent.

"Won't you take a bunch with you, Amy?" asked Miss Rachel.

"I think I will;—but no," said Amy, interrupting herself. "They would all be withered before I got there; and it does not seem right to take them into such a place. I guess I'll let them alone."

"Come, Amy," said Mr. Ryan, trying to speak cheerfully; "it is time to go."

Amy turned from one to another, and bade a silent farewell, with many kisses and tears, and got into the carriage—the same that had brought her to the farm a little more than a year before. Lizzie stood at the gate, and watched them as far as she could see the carriage; and when it was at last hidden by a bend in the road, she returned with slow steps to the house.

"ARE you sick, Lizzie?" asked Mrs. Ryan, as Lizzie was leaning back in a rocking-chair, after dinner, looking, indeed, very pale.

“I am afraid I am not far from it, mother,” said Lizzie, trying to smile. “I have felt very unwell for several days; and last night I had so much pain and fever I did not sleep at all. I should hardly have made an effort to get up this morning, but for poor Amy.”

“This excitement has been too much for you, my child,” said her mother. “I have been afraid that it would bring on one of your headaches.”

“It is not at all like one of my ordinary headaches,” said Lizzie. “I felt something of it the day before Kelly came, and it has grown worse since. I did not like to complain, if I could help it, while there was so much other trouble; but this afternoon, I fear I shall be obliged to confess that I cannot sit up.”

Mrs. Ryan was accustomed to sickness, and not easily alarmed; but, as she watched Lizzie through the afternoon, and observed her quick, feeble pulse, and her difficult breathing, she felt apprehensive that a fit of sickness was before her: and so it proved. She was so ill when her father came home, about six o'clock, that he went at once for a physician. She grew worse during the night and the next day, alternating between stupor and a kind of deli-

rium. If she was roused, she knew her father and mother, and those about her, but almost immediately went back into the same stupor again.

For days and days she seemed hardly alive, and her father and mother watched her by turns, expecting every hour to be the last. At the end of three weeks, however, she began to recover; but she was not pronounced out of danger, when Mr. Ryan himself was attacked by the same fever, and with even more violence.

It was under these distressing circumstances that Miss Rachel came out in a character which was entirely new to most of her friends, though not altogether so to others. Dr. Searle had said once before, that it would be a good thing for the peace of society, if Miss Rachel could be kept boxed up on all ordinary occasions, and only let out upon great emergencies, for then she behaved well. She seemed to need a sort of moral earthquake to arouse her to the necessity of being reasonable. Lizzie's sickness had been hardly enough to excite her to the proper point; but when her brother-in-law was prostrated by the same disease, she awoke at once, and laying aside her fretfulness and selfishness and innumerable fancies, she

gave herself up to the care of Lizzie, with a discretion and propriety which made Mrs. Andrews open her eyes, and astonished even her sister, who knew her best. Mr. Ryan was very sick indeed for five weeks, and it was much longer before he was able to sit up, even long enough to have his bed made. Despite all the help afforded by kind neighbours and friends, and the active assistance of Jane, who had left her new home and returned to Mrs. Ryan, as soon as she heard of the sickness of the family,—despite all that could be done to lighten the load, Mrs. Ryan and Rachel were almost entirely worn out before the time came that they might go to bed at ten o'clock, with the prospect of a night's rest.

Mrs. Ryan's thoughts often turned from her own troubles to follow Amy, and she made many efforts to obtain news of her. About two weeks after she left, intelligence came, by one of the neighbours, that Amy had gone to a place—though what sort of a place could not be ascertained. She wrote to her, in the forlorn hope that a letter might reach her; but no answer came, and she was obliged to conclude that she had not received it. As soon as Lizzie had recovered her powers of mind as far as to re-

member any thing, (for at one time it had seemed as if her memory were entirely gone,) her first inquiry was for Amy. She seemed not to recollect that she had gone away, and was much disappointed at not seeing her. By degrees, however, the events of the week preceding her illness came back to her, and she remembered all about it. She showed so much anxiety on the child's account, that Dr. Searle himself went into town, and spent almost a day in trying to get some trace of her; but his efforts were in vain. Amy's first friend, Miss Fairbarn, had left town, and he could learn nothing of the child in the place where Mr. Ryan had left her.

The house where they had lived was shut up, by order of the Board of Health, for the cholera was in town, and several persons had died there. When the officers appointed by the Board of Health had examined the place, they declared that the premises were unfit for human habitation, and compelled the people to move away. The only woman in the neighbourhood who seemed disposed to answer a question, did not know whether any of the Kelly family had been among those that died. "Any way the place was well rid of them, for

they were a bad set,—all but the girl, who was decent enough, for all she could see, though her mother was always running her down.”

This was all the doctor could find out, with all his pains. Mr. and Mrs. Ryan thought it probable that Amy had been among the cholera victims,—judging that she would be more exposed to its influence, from the great change she had suffered in air and diet. Though Mrs. Ryan shed many tears for the girl, and often endeavoured to find out some clue to her, she still felt a certain comfort, in the idea that she was safe from the contaminating influences of her home, and happy in heaven; and, by degrees, all but one in the house came to think of her as dead. That one was Lizzie.

She never could make up her mind that Amy was not living, and thinking of them still. She continued constantly to pray for her; and she never saw a child, of about Amy's age and appearance, coming along the road, without feeling her heart throb in the hope that it might be the lost one. She did not care to speak of her, but not the less did she cherish her memory, and hope and pray for her return.

CHAPTER VII.

“WHAT on earth are ye doing, Amy, slopping the water all over so?”

“I am trying to clean the floor and the windows a little, Mrs. Leary.”

“Lave it alone, then! It’s good enough as it is. Didn’t I clane it last week?”

“But, Mrs. Leary——”

“Lave it alone, I tell ye, and get yer basket to pick up some shavings round the boat-yard, to boil the kettle, against the father comes home. You don’t earn salt to your porridge! Off wid ye now.”

Amy did as she was bid, but with a heavy heart. She had been living at Mrs. Leary’s about four weeks. She had stayed at home only a week, before her mother had found a place for her—and such a place! Mrs. Leary kept a shop where she sold candles, and eggs, and thread, and some provisions, and a great deal of whisky. Mr. Leary—otherwise Tim—worked sometimes at wood-sawing, and sometimes at street-cleaning, and sometimes he did not work at all, but stayed at home, and occupied him-

self in drinking. The family (consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Leary, their two children, and Amy) lived in three rooms; the shop, the kitchen, (which was also parlour and bed-room,) and a little closet opening out of it, where Amy slept with the oldest child. There was a sort of window to this forlorn place, but no door, till Amy made one, by hanging up an old piece of awning that she found about the house. Amy cooked, washed, took care of the miserable baby, and went after shavings and pieces of wood for the fire. She had returned, in all outward respects, to the miserable way of life from which Mr. Ryan had taken her. She could not keep herself neat, let her try as she would, for she had no place to wash herself but the pump in the yard; and, if she tried to wash her clothes, Mrs. Leary grumbled at her for wasting her time and using up the soap; then she had no place to dry, and no place to iron them. Her nice calico frocks and aprons were torn and spoiled by the rough and dirty work she had to do, and she had no chance to mend them. Mrs. Leary paid her two shillings a week—that is, she furnished that amount of provisions and whisky to her mother, who made it a matter of boasting, that

“what with Amy’s work and Johnny’s begging, she had no need to do a hand’s turn herself.” Very few persons seeing Amy with the other girls, picking up blocks of wood and shavings, and pieces of lath, around the boat-yards and the saw-mills, would have noticed any difference between her and her companions. If they had followed her, however, they might have seen her, after she had filled her basket, seek out some retired corner, out of sight of the rest, and, sitting down, take a very little book out of the pocket of her dress; and, if they had come near enough, they would have seen that it was a Testament.

It was at these times that Amy gathered strength and courage to live. If she had been fortunate in filling her basket, she could sometimes spend half an hour in this way, and in prayer; and then she would return to her miserable place, (oh, how different from the large, clean kitchen at the farm!) where she would make the fire, wash the dishes, and carry about the crying baby, till her hard task-mistress allowed her to go to her miserable bed. There she would lie with her heart full of recollections of her little bedroom at her better home, and all the beloved friends there, till

her eyes overflowed, and she cried herself to sleep. Such was her life from day to day, varied by occasionally taking the little children and going abroad to get out of the way of Tim and Polly Leary, who, now and then, both got drunk together, and had a fight.

Remembering her orderly, pleasant and quiet life at the farm, you may wonder how Amy lived at all: and, indeed, she hardly knew herself. Now and then she felt quite ready to despair,—especially when, for two or three days together, she could find no opportunity to read the Testament. At such times all did, indeed, seem dark, and she felt as if God had forgotten her; but the feeling never lasted long. For the most part her faith was clear; and then, too, she cherished a constant hope that she should return to the farm, and be happy there again.

She had tried her best to induce Mrs. Leary to let her go to Sunday-school, but without success. Sunday was a very busy day, and she could not be spared. Mrs. Leary sold more whisky then than on any other day of the week; and since Amy obstinately refused to serve in the shop, she must take care of the baby, and the other little

one, and leave the mother at liberty to attend to her customers. Mrs. Leary would have had a battle with Amy, on this point, of selling whisky, but Tim interfered.

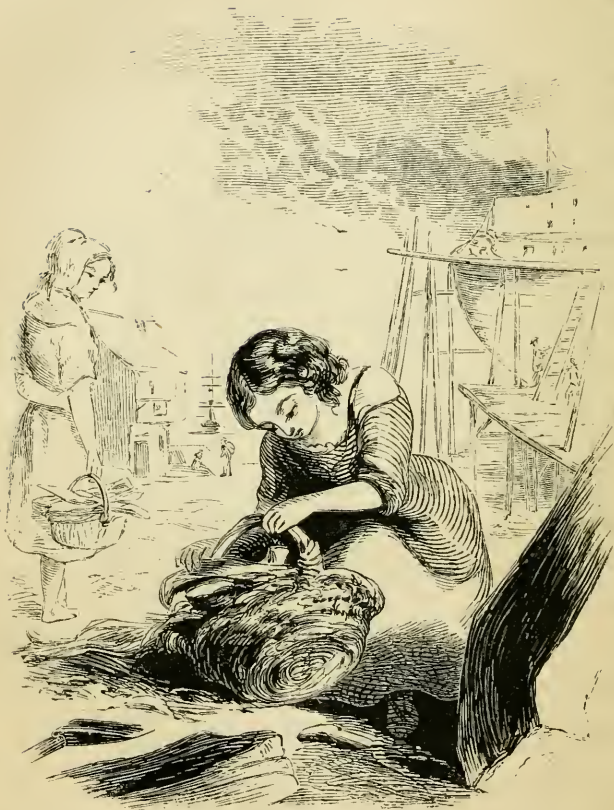
“The child shall do as she pleases about it. Sure, ye get double work out of her any way; and can’t ye be content? It’s a dacent child she is: and I wish yerself was half as nate, or could cook a male’s vittles as well. You just lave her alone, or I’ll know the reason why!”

Amy was very grateful to Tim, and took double pains to please him, after this interference. She mended his shirts and coats as well as she could with her scanty means, and tried to have his meals in some degree comfortable, and even lighted his pipe for him, much as she disliked the smell of the tobacco. Tim, who was rather a good-natured man when he was sober, appreciated these little attentions, and stood between her and many a shake and cuff, when he was at home.

Amy did not forget, even under the hopeless circumstances in which she found herself, what Mrs. Ryan had said to her about doing good. She taught the little one to say its prayers; and sometimes, when Johnny, her little brother,

found time to come round and see her, she would sit down and tell them Bible stories, and sing hymns for them. Johnny was never weary of this, nor of hearing about the farm, with the cows and chickens; but he did not like so well to ask for such stories, for the telling of them was very apt to make Amy cry. She taught Johnny his letters from the same old spelling-book in which she had said her's to dear Miss Lizzie, and would often talk to him about being a good boy, and growing up to be a good man. These times with the little ones, and the few moments she contrived to snatch early in the morning, or round among the boats, were the only happy hours she now knew.

The first day she could find time, Amy went round to Miss Fairbarn,—the first friend she had ever known,—hoping that this lady would find some means to release her from her present unhappy position, and perhaps restore her to her home again; but what was her sorrow to find the house closed! She made inquiries among the neighbours, and learned that Mr. Fairbarn had married, and moved away, taking his sister with him. She sat down on the steps of the deserted house, and cried till her head ached, and the long shadows reminded her



She had gathered her basket full of chips. p. 157.

how late it was, and then hastened home to be scolded and slapped by Mrs. Leary—Tim being too drunk to take her part.

How earnestly she longed for some news from the farm! She watched the wagons in the street day after day, in the hope that some of her friends would come to claim her, or at least inquire what had become of her. Some mornings she would even feel sure of seeing them before night, and her heart would leap to her mouth at the sight of any vehicle that resembled Mr. Ryan's. Her mother had removed from the street where she had been living all winter, to one not less dirty and vile; and Amy regretted this circumstance, as it lessened the chances of their finding her, if they should ever send. She had been leading this life some four or five weeks, when she attempted the experiment in cleaning, the result of which is related in the beginning of this chapter. She went out as she was bid, hoping, by diligence, to gain a few moments for reading. She had gathered her basket full of chips, and was half sitting, half lying in the shade of an old boat, when a long shadow interposed between her and the light, and a rough, but not ill-natured voice, said:

“Well, now, I declare if here ain’t a girl a-reading!”

Amy looked up. A great, stout, broad-shouldered man, in blue trousers and a red flannel shirt, with his shaggy black hair and whiskers full of little chips and sawdust, was looking down at her with an expression of good-natured wonder. Amy started up in terror, and attempted to put her book in her pocket; but the man caught her arm and held it fast.

“Oh, please don’t take it away, sir!” cried Amy. “It is all I have left now. I didn’t steal it, indeed! Please let me have it, and I’ll go right away, and never come here again!”

“Don’t cry. I ain’t going to take it. I only want to see what you’re about. I didn’t mean to scare you. If it ain’t a Testament! Where did you get it?”

“Miss Lizzie gave it to me, out at the farm. They won’t let me read it at home, and so I came here,” said Amy, wiping away her tears. “I didn’t know it was any harm!”

“No more it ain’t,” said the man, sitting down on a stick of timber. “So you used to live on a farm, eh? What made you leave it?”

Something in the man's tones and looks encouraged Amy; and she began to tell him her story, to which he listened with great attention. When she stopped, he said:

"So you live down at Leary's?—Nice folks, ain't they?"

"Tim is good to me, sometimes, when he hasn't been drinking," said Amy.

"And that's not often. Does the old woman use you well?—Well, you needn't answer,"—seeing that Amy hesitated. "I expect you get pretty home-sick, don't you?"

The tears which rolled down Amy's sun-burnt cheeks were her only reply.

"Poor thing! Don't cry any more," said her new friend, kindly. "Can you read pretty smart, now?"

"Yes, sir, I can read pretty well."

"Well, now, read me some! Seems to me I'd like it, just for the sake of old times."

Amy read a few passages. When she got through, she looked up in the man's face, and thought she saw some drops on his shaggy eyelashes; but he turned his head away, and muttered that the sun dazzled his eyes,—as very likely it did.

"I can't stay any longer now," said he,

after a few minutes' silence; "but I'll tell you what, Amy,—your name is Amy, ain't it? Well, Amy, my name is John Stark, and I work in this yard. Now, whenever you want a friend,—as very likely you may,—just come to me, and I'll stand by you. I live on New Church street, in a little white house, almost up to the hill, just beyond a large new brick house, with an iron fence. If ever you get in any trouble, you come to me. And, Amy, don't let them lead you into any of their wickedness, and, especially, don't you drink one drop of any thing but water. I hain't always stuck to that rule myself—more's the pity; but it's a good one for you. Now, run home with your wood; and mind you don't forget my name,—John Stark,—and where I live."

Amy felt that there was no danger of her forgetting either. She hid her little Testament, and, taking up her basket, went home, with her heart feeling lighter than it had done since she had lost sight of the dear farmhouse. To be sure, John Stark was not much like any of the people at the farm; but he had spoken kindly to her, and promised to befriend her, and had heard her read with pleasure.

She felt almost happy, and she did not mind it much, when Mrs. Leary cuffed and shook her for being gone so long, and then sent her to bed without her supper, as soon as she had washed the dishes. She added her new friend's name to the prayers she always sent up for Mrs. Ryan and Miss Lizzie and all belonging to them, and fell asleep to dream of her afternoon's adventures.

For several weeks after this, Amy used regularly to see John Stark every time she went to the yard after shavings, and got a good-humoured word or nod from him, which made her feel happy for the rest of the day. Her chief enjoyment, however, next to her Testament, was hearing little Johnny read, and teaching him to say his prayers. Johnny was a pleasant, kind-hearted little fellow, and so fond of his sister, that he would do any thing to please her. One day, he got a little out of patience with some thing he was doing, and Amy heard him make use of an oath.

"Oh, Johnny, dear, don't!" said she.

"Don't what?" asked Johnny, innocently.

"—Say such words. That's wicked—that's breaking the third commandment. I can't bear to hear you swear."

“I didn’t know it was any harm, Amy. They all say such words round here; but I won’t say so any more, if you don’t like it.”

Amy repeated the commandments, explaining them to him as well as she could.

“It seems to me every one I know is wicked according to that,” said the child, thoughtfully. “It ain’t much use trying to be good here. I mean to wait till I go away in the country.”

“Suppose you should die before you have a chance to go away,” said Amy; “you would wish, then, you had tried to be good. Besides Mrs. Ryan told me God was here, as well as in the country, and would help us if we tried to be good. Do try, Johnny.”

“I will,” said Johnny. “Some people died of the cholera, down where we used to live, yesterday, Amy,—right in that very room,—and there’s more round there. A man was round by our house yesterday, making people get their rooms whitewashed, and throwing lime in the gutters. I heard him tell my mother that she would have it, if she did not quit drinking. He said drinking folks always had it first. But mother said she did not believe it: and she and Joe were drinking last night.”

“I wonder if that’s true!” said Amy. “I

mean to tell Tim Leary of it next time he is sober. I really think Tim would be pretty good, if he didn't drink: he is so good-natured sometimes. I could never live, if he didn't take my part."

Amy kept her resolution, and the next time Tim came home, she told him; but it did not seem to make much impression on him; for, on the contrary, he said Amy was notional; and, bidding her begone about her business, he helped himself to a drink of whisky; and, dipping a lump of sugar in it, gave it to the oldest baby to suck. Amy, who loved the child, could not see this proceeding without remonstrance.

"Sure, you wouldn't want her to grow up a drunkard, Mr. Leary?"

"Mind your own business, I tell you. You'd better be setting up for a preacher yourself. I shall give the child what I see fit." And, accordingly, he continued to feed the little one with liquor till she was wild with excitement.

Amy, seeing that she could do no good, left the room to attend to her work; but she had not been gone long, when a shout from Tim and a shriek from the mother, summoned her back again. There lay the poor little creature

in its mother's arms, black in the face, and gasping in a fit; while Tim and two or three of the neighbours were crowding round, doing nothing, and excluding every breath of air. She did not stop to join in the lamentations of the group, but ran instantly for a doctor, and was fortunate enough to find one immediately. He came, examined the child, and said at once :

“ You have been giving it spirits.”

“ Scarce a drop,” said Tim. “ Nothing but water and milk has she tasted this day.”

“ I know better,” returned the doctor. “ I smell its breath now. Here, you girl there,”—turning to Amy,—“ has not this child been drinking ?”

“ Yes, sir,” said Amy, not without fear and trembling. “ I saw him feed it almost a tea-cup full of sweetened whisky. I was afraid he would kill it !”

The doctor used what means he thought proper for the restoration of the child, and, when it seemed better, he went away, threatening the father and mother with the Alms-house and the jail, if he ever did so again.

His presence had restrained them a little, but, as soon as he was gone, their wrath was

poured out, without restraint, upon poor Amy. Mrs. Leary caught her by the arm, and shook her, till she could not stand, but dropped helpless upon the first chair.

“Ye little lying——” (But we will not soil our paper by recording the words which fell from the lips of this wicked woman.) “How dare ye tell the doctor such lies?”

“’Twas not a lie,” said Amy. “I did see him feed —— with the whisky, and begged him not.”

“And why need ye tell of it? Couldn’t ye say ye didn’t know?”

“No,” replied Amy; “for that would be a lie.”

A new torrent of abuse was poured upon her by the woman; while Tim, pouring out a glass of whisky, swore she should drink it herself, before she stirred from the spot. Amy resisted and struggled; but the woman held her fast, laughing at her tears and cries. A thought struck her. She took the glass from his hand, and put it to her lips; then, watching her opportunity, she threw the whisky in his face, and the glass among the bottles on the shelf; and, profiting by the confusion thus occasioned, she darted through the open door,

and made her escape into the street. She never ceased running, till she had put two or three streets between herself and her persecutors, when she stopped to consider what she had better do. She was in the neighbourhood of the place where her mother lived, and she thought she would go there first; so she crept cautiously down the craggy steps leading to the cellar, and looked in at the windows. The room seemed full of people, talking in loud, thick tones; and she thought she heard Mrs. Leary's voice among them. She stole away again, and hid herself among some boxes and barrels, from which she could command a view of the house without being seen. Presently, she saw Tim and Polly Leary come out, and take their way toward home, holding by one another, being both too tipsy to stand alone. When they were out of sight, she ventured out, and entered the cellar; where she was received with a flood of abuse and profanity, and saw, in a moment, that her mother had been drinking. She turned, and attempted to run away; but her mother seized her, and, snatching up a stick that lay by the fire, she beat the poor child, till the stick broke in her hands; and then, pushing her out of the door, and throwing

a handful of her clothes after her, she bid her be gone, and never show her face there again!

It was now after ten o'clock, and a very dark, rainy night. There were few people in the streets, and a high wind had blown out all the lamps in the neighbourhood. Mechanically picking up the things that her mother had thrown after her, Amy wandered away, without knowing where she was going. She did not feel the storm, though the driving rain was wetting her to the skin. She hardly felt the blows, though they had been dealt with a heavy hand, for her soul was full of tumult and anguish. She had come into deep waters, where there was no standing: all the billows and the waves went over her. She could think of nothing regularly, but disconnected mazes of her past life floated through her mind in wild disorder. Now she felt as if it were all a dream, and she should awake, pretty soon, in her little, loved, clean bed-room at the farm. She even thought she heard Mrs. Ryan calling her to get up, and tried, with a night-mare feeling, to awake herself. But the rain beat in her face, and the few glimmering lights showed a scene very different from any thing at the farm. Then she thought confusedly

that she would keep on walking, till she came to Mrs. Ryan; and, without considering whether she was walking in the right direction, she quickened her steps, and walked forward as fast as she could. Two or three people whom she met, stopped and spoke to her, but she shrank from them in terror, and hurried on.

But the unnatural excitement began to pass away, and her strength failed with it. She walked on still, though not so fast, and striking against a stick of timber, she was inclined to sit down a moment and rest. She began to collect her scattered thoughts a little, and to understand her situation: and deplorable enough it seemed! She had nowhere to go and spend the night; all the lights were out in the houses round; and she could not tell, at first, where she was—every thing looked so strange and unnatural in the darkness. She sat still, resting her weary and aching head on her hand, and feeling every moment more incapable of stirring. Suddenly an image, wonderfully clear and distinct, rose in her mind;—she seemed to see the dining-room at Mrs. Ryan's, with its neat plain furniture, and Mrs. Ryan's bedroom opening out of it. They looked just as

she had seen them last, even to the uncleared breakfast table, and Miss Lizzie's work-basket on the table, full of stockings to mend. The tears flowed at the thought of the dear, good friends, she would never see again; and as she wept, she felt herself relieved, and her head grew clearer. She put her hand into her pocket to feel for her handkerchief, and it fell upon her little Testament. She took it out, and pressed it to her lips, seeming to find comfort in the very feeling of it. Promise upon promise now came thronging into her mind. "When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." She thought—"The darkness and the light are both alike unto Thee." "Call upon the Lord in the day of trouble, and he will deliver thee."

Amy began to feel more hopeful. She prayed with all earnestness for help and guidance, and then set herself to consider what she had better do. First, she tried to make out where she was. It was very dark, and there seemed to be a thunder-storm coming up. Presently it lightened, and she saw, by a flash, some unfinished boats. Another flash showed her a high stone building, and a bridge just before her, and she knew she was not far from

the yard where she had picked up chips, and read the Testament to John Stark.

“I mean to find him out to-morrow,” she thought. But what to do in the mean time! She hardly dared to stay where she was; and she was wet to the skin, and shivering besides. Should she wait till daylight, she feared she might encounter some of her relatives, or be taken up and sent to the watch-house as a vagrant. The storm passed away, scattering only a few large drops as it went over; the sky cleared rapidly, and the moon shed some light over the deserted streets. Amy, taking her bundle, walked with weary steps up the street. She heard a church clock strike eleven as she crossed the bridge, and it was almost twelve before she arrived at the place to which her friend had directed her. She found it easily enough, and was rejoiced to see a light burning, and a shadow, which she was sure was that of her friend, on the curtain. This sight gave her courage to knock; for, at first, she had thought only of sitting on the steps till morning.

“Who’s there?” cried a gruff voice. “Can’t you speak, whoever you are?”

“It’s me—Amy,” said the child, raising her voice as much as she could.

The door was opened in an instant, and John Stark, candle in hand, stood before her. He had time only for one vehement exclamation of wonder; for Amy, utterly exhausted, sank down senseless at his feet. She revived in a few moments, to feel herself carried by a pair of sturdy arms into a lighted room, and then carefully and tenderly undressed by a woman's hand, amid softened tones of wonder and pity. She felt herself safe, and, being deposited by the same sturdy arms in a comfortable bed, she was asleep in an instant almost, as if she had never known trouble in her life.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Amy awoke, it was broad day. She found herself lying in a poorly-furnished, but tolerably clean room, which seemed to open into one rather larger, where she heard some one moving softly about, washing dishes and brushing about a stove. She could hardly think where she was, at first; but, by degrees, she remembered the events of the night before. She tried to rise, but found herself so sore and tired that she could hardly move, so she laid herself down again; and, while she was looking about the room, and wondering what sort of people she had fallen among, she dropped asleep once more. She was aroused the second time by some sudden noise in the room, and, starting up, saw that an old woman was fastening up a shawl to the window for a curtain, to keep the sun from her face. As soon as she perceived that Amy was awake, she came to the side of the bed.

“So you are awake!” she said, not unkindly. “I did not know as you were going

to get your eyes open again. How do you find yourself now?"

"Pretty stiff and lame," said Amy.

"I should think as much! Why, your neck and arms look as if they had been pounded with a sledge-hammer. I can't think what sort of people you have lived among! Do you feel as if you could get up?"

"I guess so," answered Amy. "I shall feel better after moving about a little. Where shall I wash myself?"

"So you do wash yourself sometimes! I am glad of that. Come out to the sink, when you are ready. I've washed out your frock, for it was covered with mud to the knees."

"Oh, thank you, ma'am!" said Amy, gratefully. "I shall be so glad to have a clean frock to put on. I never could get a chance to wash any thing down at Leary's, and I have not felt decently clean before, since I came from home," she continued, after she had bathed her face, neck and arms plentifully with cold water, and rinsed her mouth.

The old woman regarded these toilet operations with an approving eye.

"So you have not been always brought up in the street. There is a comb for your

hair. So you had a decent home once, did you?"

"Yes, ma'am," sighed Amy. "I had a very pleasant home. I don't suppose I shall ever see it again, though!"

"Well, don't be down-hearted, but eat your breakfast, and tell me all about it. You don't look like the common run of street folks, that's certain."

Amy told her story to the old woman, whose face relaxed more and more from its severity as she listened.

"Do tell!" she said, when she had heard it all. "Well, to be sure! I wouldn't have believed it! And you learned to do all sorts of things out there, did you? Can you sew now?—mend stockings, and such?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Amy. "I can sew pretty well,—and cook some,—and iron. Mrs. Ryan taught me a great deal. I will mend those stockings, if you will let me."

"Do tell!" exclaimed the old woman again. "Don't you want any more breakfast? Why, you have hardly eaten a mouthful. Let's see how you make out at washing dishes."

Amy made out to the satisfaction of her new

acquaintance, who then allowed her to dust the room, while she made some preparations for dinner; for it was now almost noon, and "John would soon be home."

"Is John Stark your son?" asked Amy.

"My son! Bless you, no. I've got nor chick nor child belonging to me. I only live in his house, and take care of his things for him. His wife died about a year after they were married. I was living round in the next street, poor enough, for I had been too sick to take in washing, as I commonly did, and the overseer had been threatening to take me to the County-house. I was standing out by my door, thinking what in the world I should do next, when I saw John coming along from his work; and he stopped and asked me if any thing was the matter. I did feel dreadful bad,—that's a fact,—and I told him all about it, and how I was afraid of going to the Poor-house. He thought a minute, and thus says he:—'Mrs. Barker,' says he, 'I think we had better make a join, and take care of one another. I kind of hate to give up my house and home,' says he,—and I saw the tears come in his eyes; for he is an uncommon kind man,—John is,—and thought every thing of his wife,

though she was a shiftless creature by all accounts."

"Well, and so——" said Amy, desirous to hear the rest.

"That's all!" said Mrs. Barker. "I came here the next day, and have lived here ever since. John is a good creature,—though he has a kind of spree now and then,—and provides every thing first-rate. Well, if you really want to mend them, there are the ball and needle, and the shears. I believe I'll step down to the grocery, and get some fresh eggs. Don't you stir out the door now. John said you was not to go into the street."

Amy promised obedience, and set herself down to the task of repairing John's socks. Her eye glanced from time to time about the room. There was a nice, clean little stove, on a brick hearth, over which was a mantel-piece, decorated with two brass candlesticks, a great deal too good to be used, a glass lamp, a snuff-box, two china cups, and some shells. On a little stand, at the other side of the room, were a large old Bible, and two work-boxes,—one a green little old-fashioned thing, the other quite smart and new,—and three or four books. The walls, papered with cheap green paper,

were decorated with three or four representations of dressy ladies playing upon surprising harps, or embroidering with impossible needles. A door opened into the yard, and another into a rough wood-shed, while a third, half-open, showed a light pantry, where there seemed to be a tolerable supply of dishes and other conveniences. Amy was glad to see that they did not seem to be very poor; and, as she sat at work, every thing seemed so pleasant and home-like, that she began to sing—a thing she had not done since she left the farm, except when the children had desired it. She had despatched the mending, and, still singing, was sewing away at a shirt she had found in the basket, when Mrs. Barker returned from the shop, and John Stark with her.

“Hey!” she exclaimed. “That sounds something like! So you are in the basket already, are you?”

“Are you sure you can sew well enough to do that?” asked Mrs. Barker, rather anxiously.

Amy held up for inspection what she had already accomplished.

“That’s very nice. You get along first-rate with it. You seem to know how to take hold of things right smart.”

“To be sure she does,” said John. “I told you she was a smart one.—So you ran away from Leary’s, did you? and came up here in the rain. You was as wet a frog as I ever saw when I picked you up last night.”

“How did you know I ran away?” asked Amy.

“Well, I partly guessed it. I heard Leary round, asking for you, this morning. He wanted to know if any one had seen you. He laid it all to the old woman.”

“It was both of them,” said Amy,—“one as much as the other.”

“Did they beat you so?” asked Mrs. Barker.

“No,” said Amy. “They only shook and slapped me, and tried to make me drink. It was mother that whipped me. She would not have done it if she had been herself.”

“May be not—and may be she would,” answered John; “but, any way, I don’t like you the worse for excusing her. Well, here is dinner, and I must eat it, and be off to work. We’ll have a talk when I come home to-night.”

The dinner was comfortable, though very plain as to quality; and Amy was very glad to sit down to a decent table again. There was

not much conversation during the meal, for John was in a hurry, and ate very fast. After dinner, Amy helped Mrs. Barker to wash the dishes, and put every thing in order; and then they both sat down to sew. There was plenty to be done, for Mrs. Barker took in plain sewing. Amy had been carefully taught to do several sorts of nice sewing, and she persuaded Mrs. Barker to let her stitch some wristbands and collars. The old woman looked on with some anxiety at first; but she soon saw that Amy knew what she was about.

“I am glad you know how to do such things, Amy. I could get plenty of nice shirts to make, only I can’t see to stitch as well as I used to.”

“Mrs. Ryan was very careful about my sewing,” observed Amy, “and always made me do every thing the best way. She made even Miss Lizzie be just as particular as could be in every stitch of sewing she did.”

“She was a knowing woman,” said Mrs. Barker. “There are so many young girls, and grown up women too, for that matter, who do not know how to take a stitch as it ought to be. I’ve many a time seen shirts with the seams run up, and sometimes not even

felled. Such girls get married to some fellow as ignorant as themselves, and they don't know as well how to set themselves to work to take care of a family, as that cat would. Consequence is, they waste half their means,—don't have any thing comfortable after all,—their children go looking like distress, and themselves worse. Many's the pretty girl I have seen go that way, only from not knowing how to do things about house as they ought to be done."

Mrs. Barker stopped to bite off her thread, and then continued:

"Now I was taught to sew in school. I was brought up in the country, and went to a district school. They didn't have such grand houses, nor such a fuss made about them as they do now; but I guess we learned as much in the long run. My folks were poor, and I have always had to work hard ever since I can remember; but then I knew how to make the best of all I had. No one ever saw my old man with a ragged jacket, though he had two or three that were not much but patches. But now, you take a great many of the girls round here, that go to the district-school, and they don't know any more how to put in a patch than I should to read a Latin book. I hear

the ladies have taken up trying to teach some of the poorest; and that is a very good thing, if they can only make them learn. But so many of the children that go around with baskets are such creatures, it don't seem much use to try to learn them."

"I don't know that," said Amy. "Some of them are very bad, to be sure; but many of them would do better, if they only knew how. Just think, Mrs. Barker, what sort of places they live in, and with what sort of people! It is no wonder if they are bad. I'll tell you what they need. They just want friends more than any thing. They want to feel as if some one felt for them, and would be glad to see them good. I know how that is well enough. Miss Fairbarn was the first person that ever spoke a kind word to me, that I can remember. I was bad enough then, I know; but it was partly, I hope, because I did not know any better. But, as soon as she began to teach me and befriend me, I tried to improve; and I would have done almost any thing to please her. Children can feel, if they are ever so dirty, and ragged, and bad; and they know quite enough when any one is kind to them, and tries to do them good."

“Well, may be you are right, child,” replied Mrs. Barker. “I am sure my heart often aches for the poor things, when I see them round in all their rags and dirt; and when I see boys in the street—bright little fellows, some of them, that any gentleman might be proud of,—swearing and fighting, and getting into all sorts of wickedness, before they know how to talk almost, I sometimes feel thankful that my own two was taken away at once, before they learned such ways. And then again, I think perhaps they would have grown up smart and good, and cared for me in my old age. But it is best as it is, no doubt; and John Stark is as good as a son, though he is not all I could wish sometimes, and is amazing set in his way. But we all have our faults.”

Mrs. Barker now launched out into a long relation of her own trials and troubles,—delighted to have a new and patient listener. The story was long, with many digressions and moralizings; but Amy listened with interest, partly because she saw that it gave the old woman pleasure to talk, and partly because it was a perfect delight to her to be once more in the company of decent people. The afternoon

soon passed away, and Mrs. Barker was quite surprised when the old clock struck five.

When John came home at six, he found supper ready on the table, and Amy watching for him at the door. She looked so delighted when she saw him coming and ran to meet him with such vivacity, that he was quite affected, and declared to Mrs. Barker, in confidence, that it was as good as finding a five dollar piece to see her.

“Well!” said John, after tea, sitting down on the door-step, with Amy beside him,—“do you think you and the old woman are going to get on together?”

“Oh, yes!” replied Amy. “She has been very good to me; and I have been helping her all the afternoon.”

“She is a good soul,” continued John, “though she has her odd ways sometimes, like the rest of us. She has seen a deal of trouble; and sometimes I think her head is a little out of order; but, on the whole, we get along very smoothly. Well now, about you? What do you suppose you are going to do?”

“I don’t know! I must try to get a place somewhere, I suppose.”

“You see, Amy,” said John, “I should like

to keep you here, if I could afford it; but the fact is, times are pretty hard with me just now. If there was only me and the old woman, we should do very well; but that ain't all. I have got my mother to support besides,—that is, my wife's mother, you understand. But perhaps you didn't know I ever had a wife?"

"Mrs. Barker told me about it," said Amy.

"Ah, well! She is helpless and out of her mind besides. Her own children would let her go to the Poor-house; but that I won't hear of; so I take care of her as well as I can. Old Mr. Knight gives her the rent of the house where she lives, and I provide for her. She won't have me live with her; and now and then she takes a notion that I shan't come near her. But most times, she is pleasant, and glad to see me, and will talk for an hour as sensible as any one. The worst of it is, that she can't be persuaded that her daughter is dead; and thinks it very hard that I won't let Sarah come and see her. Poor girl!" John paused a little, and then went on—"So you see, Amy, I can't take any more on myself just now. However, you are welcome to stay

till you find a place; and I should like to have you call it home here, and come up and see us whenever you can."

Amy was very grateful.

"How do you think I had better go to work to find a place?"

"I don't know any more than you do. Haven't you any acquaintance in the city that you can go to?"

"I know Dr. W. Do you know where he lives?"

"Yes; but he isn't in here now, and his people are all in the country. I heard his man saying so last night. Isn't there any one else?"

Amy could not think of any one else that could be likely to help her. She thought the best way would be to go round, and see if she could get some one to take her on trial. And it was decided that she should do so in the morning.

The old woman was far from pleased when she heard of the arrangement; for she had taken a fancy to Amy, and had decided in her own mind that she was to live with them. She thought the child might earn her living there, as well as anywhere else. But Amy knew

better herself. She was well aware how much difference one mouth more to feed makes in the family of a working man.

“Where is the little Testament you were reading, when I found you there on the chips? You have not lost it, I hope,” said John, after all was settled.

“Oh, no, indeed!” answered Amy. “It is safe in my pocket. I wouldn’t lose it for any thing. It is not as pretty as it was when Miss Lizzie gave it to me,” she continued, taking it out and gazing at it affectionately; “but I think more of it then I did then. I believe I’d have died many a time, but for this little book.”

“That’s curious!” said John. “I always had a liking for the Bible myself, because of hearing my old father and mother read it, when I was a boy; but I never did understand the pleasure some people take in it. There is my mother-in-law, now,—poor thing!—crazy as she is, she takes all the comfort in the world in reading and hearing it read; and sometimes, when I am there Sunday afternoons, I read to her hours at a time. There is a minister comes to see her pretty often,—a first-rate man he is, too;—and one day he brought another minis-

ter, a youngish man, to see her, too. It was a warm afternoon, and I was sitting out on the door-step. They stayed a long time; and when they came out, the younger man says, 'Dr. H., that poor woman is ready for a very high place in the kingdom of heaven. Don't you think so?'—'Yes,' says Dr. H.; and then he put his hand on my shoulder, and says he, 'Here's a man that is not far from the kingdom either. We hope he will be in it altogether one of these days.' I wish it was true, I am sure. But tell me, Amy, what makes you like the Bible so well?"

"Because—— I don't know as I can tell. It is God's word, you know; and tells us all about him, and all his promises are in it. Then it tells all about Jesus coming to save sinners, and what we must do to be saved. And then there are such beautiful stories in it, like what I read you the other day, you know. Oh, it is the very best book in the world!"

"It seems to have made a good girl of you, any way," remarked John. "Suppose you give us a little now."

"What shall I read?" asked Amy.

"Read that same chapter again. I like it as well any."

Amy read, and John listened with great apparent pleasure.

“I remember hearing that read when I wasn’t as high as my knee. Let’s have another.”

Amy read another.

“Now can’t you sing one of them hymns you were singing when I came in?”

Amy had a very sweet natural voice, and sang with great feeling; so that a more cultivated ear than that of John Stark or Mrs. Barker might have been pleased to hear her. She sang one hymn after another, till she was fairly tired. John sat listening, with his head resting on his hands, looking quite thoughtfully down at the ground. When it was quite dark, they went into the house; and as John lighted his candle to go to bed, he declared he had not spent such a pleasant evening—he didn’t know when. “It won’t do for you to stay here long, Amy. We should not know what to do without you.”

The next day was not quite so agreeable. It was rather forlorn to go from house to house among strangers, inquiring for a place. She avoided the street on which her parents lived, keeping as far from it as possible,

though she was extremely anxious to get sight of little Johnny, and tell him where she had found refuge. On a little reflection, however, she thought it best not to do so, until she was settled somewhere, as he might not have discretion enough to keep it to himself. After a number of applications and repulses, she knocked at the door of a neat-looking little house, on a quiet street, and an elderly-looking woman came to the door.

“If you please, ma’am, do you want a girl?” asked Amy,—though she had asked in vain so often, that the word almost died on her lips.

“Well, I don’t know,” answered the woman. “Do you want a place yourself?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“You had better come in and rest yourself, at any rate,” said Mrs. Cummings. “I was rather thinking of getting a girl, too. How old are you?”

“I am going on fourteen, ma’am.”

“You are a stout girl of your age. Have you ever lived out?”

“Yes, ma’am. I lived out a year in the country.”

Mrs. Cummings asked a variety of questions,

as to what she could do, where she had lived last, where she was staying now, &c. &c. At last, she inquired who her parents were, and where they lived. "Are they respectable people, child?"

"No, ma'am," said Amy, frankly, but in a low voice.

"That is honest, at any rate; but I am afraid your mother will be coming after you, and making trouble. Won't she?"

"I hardly think she will," said Amy. "I don't mean to have her know where I am, if I can help it. They turned me out of the house the other night, and told me never to come home again. My mother drinks sometimes."

"Dear me, what works!" exclaimed Mrs. Cummings. "Well, Amy, I don't know but I'll give you a trial. I will talk with my daughter about it, and see what she thinks.—Susan!" (she called,) "Susan! Come here, will you?"

"In a minute,"—answered a voice up-stairs. "Can't you come up here? What is it?"

Mrs. Cummings went up-stairs, and presently came down again with her daughter. Miss Susan was a young lady, very carefully

curled, and admirably dressed, with great attention to effect, and had rather a genteel look—though she was not pretty. She surveyed Amy with a supercilious gaze, which the child felt to be somewhat disagreeable, and said :

“So you want a place, my girl? I suppose you know no more how to do any thing than a Hottentot. Can you sew?”

“Yes, miss. I can sew pretty well, and sweep, and dust, and iron, and cook some. I don’t know how to bake; but I can get dinner, and do such things.”

“Indeed! You are quite accomplished! Where did you pick up so much?”

“Mrs. Ryan taught me,” said Amy.

Mrs. Cummings and her daughter now went into the next room, and held a consultation, which ended in Amy’s being engaged for the sum of thirty-seven and a half cents a week, and she was to come next day before dinner.

“And mind, Amy, you must not be wanting to run out all the time,” said Mrs. Cummings. “I cannot have a girl that wants to be always in the street.”

“I don’t care about going out,” said Amy;

“only I should like to go to Sunday-school, and to church sometimes.”

“Oh, of course, you can go to Sunday-school!”

“I don’t know about that, mother. It will be inconvenient to have her going away on Sunday at noon. I should think she might be satisfied without that.”

“Susan! For shame!” said her mother. “Would you deprive a child of such a benefit, even if it were a little inconvenient?—Yes, you can go to Sunday-school, and welcome. There is one quite near here.”

Miss Susan tossed her head, and murmured something about girls keeping their places, to which her mother paid no attention.

It was finally settled that Amy was to come next day, and that she was to go to Sunday-school and to church in the afternoon; and she departed, well pleased with her bargain. She had penetration enough to see that Miss Susan was very different from Miss Lizzie, and that she might, perhaps, have some difficulty in pleasing her; but she determined to do her best, and try to give satisfaction.

She was at home in time for supper, hungry enough, and gave an account of her success.

John growled at the proposed wages ; but allowed that it might do to begin with ; and Amy went to bed, very tired, but quite happy in the thought of having a respectable home, and earning something for herself and Johnny, and above all of going to Sunday-school and church once more.

CHAPTER IX.

AMY went to her new place next day, taking with her all the clothes—few, indeed, they were—remaining from the stock which she had brought from the farm. She got up very early in the morning to wash, and iron, and mend them; and when they were all ready, she tied them up in a bundle, and departed, promising John Stark and Mrs. Barker to come and see them as often as she could.

Mrs. Cummings received her kindly, and showed her where to put her bundle. She was glad to find that there was no other girl, and that she had a room to herself. When she found herself alone, her first action was to kneel down and ask God to enable her to do her duty in her new situation, and to glorify His name, by being faithful in the few things committed to her. Then she put on a clean apron, and went down-stairs. Mrs. Cummings was in the kitchen, and showed Amy where to find the potatoes which she was to wash for dinner. Amy cleaned them to her entire satisfaction,

and then went into the dining-room to set the table, which she knew how to do very well, having been accustomed to the same duty at Mrs. Ryan's. Two or three things she found different from what she had been used to at the farmer's.

"Please to tell me where to find the napkins, Miss Susan."

"Oh, we don't use napkins every day," said Mrs. Cummings, who heard the question.

"Did they use napkins every day at Mrs. Ryan's?" asked Miss Susan.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Dear me! I didn't know people were so stylish in the country. I suppose they had silver forks too, didn't they?"

"No, ma'am. I never saw any silver forks there. They had very nice steel ones."

"Is there any meat for dinner, Mrs. Cummings?"

"No," said Mrs. Cummings,— "at least none to cook. I will attend to that myself."

She went into the cellar, and produced a very small piece of cold, boiled pork, which, with the potatoes, constituted the whole dinner. There was, indeed, so little, that Amy, when she went in after Mrs. Cummings and her

daughter had finished, hardly felt at liberty to eat any thing at all, especially as she felt that Miss Susan was watching every mouthful. After she had finished, Mrs. Cummings put away the small remains of the cold pork and potatoes, and, locking the safe, put the key in her pocket !

As soon as the dishes were out of the way, Mrs. Cummings gave Amy a shirt to make, at which she sewed until it was time to get tea. There was rather more on the table for tea ; but Amy noticed that the cake was taken away and locked up, before she was called in to eat her supper. She did not care much about that, for she was not very fond of sweet things ; but she rather wondered at it,—it was so different from Mrs. Ryan's way of managing. She would have thought they were very poor, and Mrs. Cumming's own appearance did not contradict it, for the calico wrapper she wore was no better than Mrs. Barker's ; but Miss Susan was very elegantly and rather expensively dressed ; and the front parlour, into which Amy had been sent to close the blinds, was very nicely furnished, and contained a much handsomer piano than Miss Lizzie's. So they could not be poor ; and she did not comprehend it at all.

After tea, she sat out on the back steps with her sewing, as she used to do at Mrs. Ryan's,—though the prospect was not much like that from the broad, flat stone at the kitchen door. There was a little bit of a back yard, with some posts for clothes-lines in it, a high board fence, an old straggling lilac and a damask rose-bush. The kitchen doors of eight different houses were in sight around, and there was hardly a green thing to be seen, except the tops of some locust trees in the next yard. She sat till almost half-past eight, when Mrs. Cummings came to find her, commended her diligence and sent her to bed, with a charge to be up early.

“Can I have a candle to go to bed with?” asked Amy.

“What in the world do you want of a candle?” asked Miss Susan. “It is not dark at all.”

“I like to read in the Testament a little, before I go to bed,” answered Amy, hesitatingly.

Miss Susan seemed to think it a surprising circumstance, that a girl, like Amy, should read the Testament of her own accord. However, she furnished her with a candle end,

about two inches long, giving her a careful charge not to set any thing on fire.

The breakfast, next morning, was much like what the dinner had been, except that there was not even an apology for meat. After the meal was over, Miss Susan, who had made her appearance in an old, faded, calico wrapper, with her front hair in papers, and no collar, employed herself in dusting the parlour, arranging the books and music, and setting in order the chairs. When this was accomplished to her full satisfaction—a work of time and pains—she sat herself down in the back room, and watched the passers by, or employed herself upon an elaborately worked handkerchief, till it was time to dress for visitors.

Amy, meantime, was helping Mrs. Cummings wash. The same attention to minute economy was displayed about this also; and she was several times reproved for using too much soap, and too much wood, when she thought she was really very careful indeed. Miss Susan had two white frocks in the wash, with skirts to match, but all the other garments were of the coarsest description, and by no means new.

The fact was, the family lived all on the outside. They had income enough to keep them

above want and allow them the means of living comfortably, but they stinted themselves in all sorts of necessities, hardly allowed themselves sufficient or healthy food, and spent half their time in devising ways and means of saving, in order that Miss Susan might have evening dresses and new bonnets, and appear as fashionably dressed as their neighbour, Miss Compton, who was ten times as wealthy.

Miss Susan did very little work, because that would spoil the delicacy of her hands; her mother's were of no consequence. She was distressed at being caught with a broom in her hands; while her model, Miss Compton, thought nothing of sweeping, dusting, or working when occasion required, and rather boasted of her skill in all sorts of housewifery. Miss Susan believed that Miss Compton liked to be thought peculiar, because she always walked to church—though her father kept a carriage—almost always attended the week-day services, and had a class in Sunday-school: moreover, she had more than once been known to open the door to visitors herself, and once gave a coloured girl that lived with them a dress of her own, to wear on a Fourth of July.

Miss Compton herself thought it very conve-

nient to have a carriage, because sometimes it rained, or was muddy, and she could not walk. She dressed fashionably, because her mother desired it, though she cared little for dress herself. She bought books for the Sunday-school, and made presents to her own pupils, because she was pleased to see others pleased, and because she liked to gratify Dr. H., her pastor, for whom she had a great respect. Mrs. Cummings and Miss Susan were constant attendants at church in pleasant weather, though neither of them ever went when it rained or snowed. They knew every bonnet and cloak in the whole congregation, and could calculate to a dollar, as they said, the cost of every article of dress for ten pews around. Mrs. Cummings took no part in the Sunday-school, because her domestic affairs required her presence at home the moment church was out, and Miss Susan would have found it too fatiguing!

They were always glad to see the minister when he called, because he was a very elegant man, and was much in the society of the people they courted most; and Miss Susan would listen with the greatest civility, when he urged her to seek more earnestly the kingdom of God. But his counsel abode not in her heart or mind.

Her great ambition was to imitate Miss Compton in dress and appearance; and, considering her limited means, she succeeded wonderfully well. Mrs. Cummings' heart and soul were bound up in her daughter, and she cared for nothing else. She was willing to work her fingers to the bone, in order that Susan's hands might be kept fair and delicate; and to live the year round on pork and potatoes, that Susan might have nice cake and coffee to offer her young friends when they called in the evening. The oldest daughter had married very advantageously (in a worldly point of view) some years before, and the mother was bent on securing an equal establishment for Susan; this object accomplished, she felt that she could die content.

Such were the people among whom Amy now found herself. She now learned that Miss Susan was hard to please sometimes, and she was often reproved by her for carelessness, wastefulness and other faults, when she was trying to do her best. Mrs. Cummings, on the whole, treated her kindly. Amy was careful not to abuse her liberty of going to church and Sunday-school, but was always at home in time to do her evening's work; and, as a reward for this punctuality, Mrs. Cummings allowed

her, after she had lived there three or four weeks, to have a whole afternoon to herself in which to visit her friends. Amy was very grateful, and tried to show that she was so, by putting the kitchen in beautiful order, getting the wood and kindlings all ready, and filling the tea-kettle, so as to save Mrs. Cummings as much trouble as possible. She then set out, carrying on her arm a little basket containing three or four cakes, which Miss Susan had given her as a reward for starching her night-caps for her, and some little tracts and papers she had received at Sunday-school. She hoped she might meet little Johnny, from whom she had heard nothing since the night of her memorable escape from the grog-shop.

As she passed General Compton's garden, the beds looked so gay with blooming plants, that she stopped a few moments to see them; as she stood looking through the gate, Miss Compton came out of the house with a gentleman whom Amy thought she knew, and seeing Amy standing at the gate, and supposing she might have some errand, asked her kindly what she wanted.

"Nothing, ma'am," said Amy, respectfully.
"I was only looking at the flowers."

“Oh! very well. But where have I seen you before?”

“I have seen you two or three times in Sunday-school, ma'am; and you taught our class on Sunday when Miss Myers was gone; and I have opened the door for you at Mrs. Cummings'.”

“True—I remember now. You may come in, if you please, and walk round among the beds—but don't touch any thing.”

Amy promised to be careful, and went in, rejoiced to find herself once more in a garden, though a much finer one than she had ever seen before. She paused before a verbena bed, and seemed so lost in admiration of the variety of gay colours, that Miss Compton called her companion's attention to her.

“Oh, yes,” said the gentleman, “you are the little girl that came into Miss Myers' class two or three Sundays ago—yes—and what did you say your name was—Nancy?”

“Amy, sir,” she replied, recognising him as the assistant minister of the church where she attended.

“Amy—oh, to be sure—there was a girl named Nancy came into Miss Parker's class the same day. Amy Kelly—yes—and you live at

Mrs. Cummings'—to be sure, I remember. Well, Amy, and how do you like your school? Can you read, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Amy, "I like it very much."

"That's right—I like that"—said the gentleman. "A very faithful teacher is Miss Myers," said he, addressing Miss Compton. "And so you like to read?—yes, that's right. And where are you going, eh? And what have you got in your little basket?"

"I have got some cakes, and some tracts that Miss Myers gave me, and I am going to see John Stark and Mrs. Barker. Mrs. Cummings gave me leave."

"Quite right," rejoined Mr. Rosenberg—"never go without leave. John Stark," he repeated, "I know that name. A large tall man, is he, with black whiskers—lives up the river, don't he? Takes care of his mother-in-law—eh?"

"Yes, sir," answered Amy to all these questions.

"Oh, yes! yes, I know him! I went with Dr. H. to see the old woman, two or three times. Really, Miss Compton, it would be worth your while to visit her—a most beautiful example of the power of religion. I felt my-

self humbled in the dust by the side of that poor, infirm, deranged creature. Any one might take a lesson from her. Her son-in-law supports her, and is as dutiful to her as possible. Well, and John Stark is your brother, is he?"

"No, sir," said Amy, "but he has been very good to me, as he is to every one, and I like him very much."

"That's right—always be grateful to your benefactors," said Mr. Rosenburg. "Tell your friend John Stark, I should like to make his acquaintance, will you? I live at number 12 Charles street, and should be pleased to see him. Here is a little book for you."

"And here are some flowers for you," said Miss Compton, putting a bunch into her hands, "and now you can go on your way, if you have seen the garden enough."

Amy expressed her thanks, and was quite delighted with the kindness of Mr. Rosenburg and the young lady. She was crossing the lower end of the street where her mother lived, when she was suddenly clasped by a pair of little, ragged arms, and a voice exclaimed, "Amy—it's Amy herself! Oh! it's myself that's glad to see you! Sure, I thought you was lost for good!"

Amy kissed Johnny heartily, without minding the dirt on his face, and taking him by the hand, led him into the next street, which was quiet and retired.

“O, Johnny, how I have longed to see you! and how’s mother?”

“She is as bad as ever. And do you know, Amy, Mrs. Leary is dead, and the poor children, and they have taken Tim to jail! They had the cholera, and all died in one day, and Tim dead drunk on the floor; that’s the way they found them, and that’s the way it’ll be at our house, one of these days. The cholera is getting very bad. And where do you live, Amy?”

“I live on Grand street, on the other side of the river, with a lady.”

“Is she good to you? Did she give you them flowers?”

“She gave me these cakes,” said Amy, taking them from her basket, “and here are some pictures for you, that I got in Sunday-school.”

Johnny took the cakes gladly, and ate them as if he was very hungry.

“I wish you could come to our Sunday-school,” continued Amy. “I like it the best of any one I ever went to—Mr. Rosenberg, the

minster, is so kind. Then I could see you every Sunday."

"I mean to come," said Johnny, "only I haven't any clothes fit. Do you suppose they would let me come just as I am?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" answered Amy, "and glad to see you."

Johnny and Amy walked along talking, till they came to John Stark's gate. Then Amy kissed him again, and bade him good-bye for the present, promising that he should walk home with her, and see where the church was. She went gently in, and finding Mrs. Barker busily sewing, she came behind her, and putting her hands over her eyes, kissed her two or three times. Mrs. Barker was quite delighted.

"Dear me!" said she, taking off her glasses, and holding Amy a little way off, to look at her, "how nice you look, and how you grow! But seems to me, you are rather thin. Don't they keep you well?"

"Yes, well enough," said Amy, "but you know it is warm weather, and I grow so fast. And how do you do, and how is John?"

"John's well—that is, middling well. He runs back and forth to see the old lady so much, I think it kind of wears him, though he

says it don't—he is a good fellow, that's a fact. He will be home pretty soon, for he is always in early Saturdays, and he'll be so glad to see you! I declare, I'm as pleased to have you come in as if you was my own."

"See what beautiful flowers I have brought you," said Amy, "only I want to take home two or three; and now I am going to stay all the afternoon. Mrs. Cummings said I might, only I must be home before dark."

Amy took off her bonnet, and taking some work out of the old woman's basket, sat down to sew with her. Mrs. Barker asked her a great many questions about her place, and the people she was with; and, finally, asked "if they were well off?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Amy. "I can't tell any thing about it. Sometimes I think they are, and sometimes not. Miss Susan has beautiful dresses and bonnets, and all such things, and the parlour is very nice. Miss Susan goes out very often, and has a deal of company, evenings; but they often say they cannot afford this and that. I don't know what to think sometimes."

"I know well enough. They are all for outside show, and half-starve themselves, in

order to look fine. There are a great many such in the world, you will find. Do you go to Sunday-school?"

"Yes,—every Sunday,—and it is so nice, Mrs. Barker, you can't think! My teacher takes a great deal of pains to explain our lessons to us, and I have a book every Sunday. They have a large room for the large scholars, and another for the little ones, with large glass-doors between, and pictures and maps all round the room. And Mr. Rosenburg goes all round every Sunday, and speaks to the children, and sometimes gives us a card or a little book, when we say our lessons well; and all the children like him very much, and the teachers, too. Sometimes Dr. H. comes into the school. He isn't a bit like Mr. Rosenburg. He is such a grave man, and, somehow, different from other people; but he tells us very interesting things. I like him very much, too. His two daughters have classes in the school, near ours. And there is Miss Compton,—I like her very much. I wonder if they are rich!"

"What! old General Compton, that lives on Grand street? I guess they are, child—a great deal the richest people in town. General Compton's father was the richest man in

all these parts. My old man was brought up on his farm. I want to know if she teaches in Sunday-school!"

"Yes," said Amy; "and she comes as regular as Sunday itself. I thought they must be something extra, for Miss Susan often repeats what she says. 'Miss Compton does this,' and 'Miss Compton says that.'"

"You don't like Miss Susan very well, then?" said Mrs. Barker, smiling.

"I like her well enough, but not as well as her mother. Mrs. Cummings is really good to me. I try all I can to please both of them; but sometimes I cannot satisfy Miss Susan, do what I will."

"I shouldn't try much, if I were you," said Mrs. Barker.

Amy hesitated a moment, and then said:

"But, Mrs. Barker, would that be right? You know it says in the Bible, that we are not to be eye-servants; but in singleness of heart, fearing God, rendering our service heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men."

"That don't mean that you should fret yourself to death to please people," said Mrs. Barker.

"Oh, I don't do that!" said Amy, laughing;

“but I like to do the best I can, whether they are pleased or not, because I feel happier. I found the text about that one day, after Miss Susan had been scolding me, and you don’t know how much good it did me. Now, when she is really unreasonable, I think, Well, I am doing it to the Lord, and not unto man. Then, I know I am often awkward, and don’t do things right, and so it is my fault; and, besides”——

Besides what, did not appear; for just then, John Stark came in and greeted Amy very heartily.

John was very much pleased to find her in good health and spirits; and, after chiding her gently for not coming to see them sooner, he said:

“So you like your place, do you?”

“Oh, yes,” answered Amy,—“a great deal better than I expected. To be sure, it is not like being at the farm. But I try to thank God that I have so good a place.”

“Do you go to church anywhere? You were in a great taking to go to Sunday-school when you were here.”

“Oh, yes!” said Amy, brightening up at once. “And I like it so much!”

She gave an animated description of the delights of her school, and finished by repeating Mr. Rosenburg's message.

"I guess I've seen him," said John. "I expect he came to see the old lady once with Dr. H." ('The old lady,' was John's invariable way of designating his mother-in-law.) "Is he a little pale man, with light, curling hair, and large blue eyes, and talks as fast as his tongue will go?"

"Yes," answered Amy, laughing; "and says, 'Oh, yes—yes,' every little while. He seemed to know all about you; and told Miss Compton about your taking care of your mother-in-law, and she said she should like to see her."

"Dear me, John," said Mrs. Barker, "you will be quite set up, with so many great folks taking notice of you. But I reckon you feel yourself as good as they, any day."

"I don't know about that," John replied, thoughtfully. "I am afraid it will be long enough before I feel myself as good as Dr. H., or the old lady either. But, when does your Mr. Rosenburg preach, Amy? I'd go to hear him if I knew, though I haven't been inside of a church many times since my poor girl died."

She used to make me go almost every Sunday, for she was a member of the church, and wanted me to be one, too. Ah, well! When did you say he preached, Amy?"

"He will preach all day to-morrow," answered Amy; "for Dr. H. has gone away. Do come over, John. I am sure you will like it."

"I can't come in the afternoon," said John, "because of going to see the old lady, and reading to her. She would fret herself to death unless I came; so I will go in the morning. Shall you be there?"

"Not in the morning," replied Amy. "But I always go to Sunday-school, and if I wait a few minutes at the church-door, I shall see you. I want Johnny to come over to Sunday-school, and I am going to take him home with me to teach him the way. I wish, John, if it is not troubling you too much,—I wish you could contrive to speak to, or notice Johnny now and then. He is a good boy, considering; and I am afraid he has hard times at home, from what he says. I don't mean that you should give him any thing, you know,"—she continued, anxious lest she should be misunderstood. "It isn't that. Only he would think

so much of it, if you would now and then notice him, when he comes after chips."

"I will remember it. But why don't you want me to give him any thing?"

"Oh, because! You have enough to do now, and too much. If you could find him any thing to do, that would be the best; but he don't know how to do any thing."

"And I suppose they would take all he earned away from him."

"Very likely," said Amy. "But it is not so much the wages, as it is his feeling as if he had a friend, and some one to care for him. That's what they want more than any thing."

"I believe that's true enough," replied John. "I'll see what can be done for Johnny, if it is only to please you."

"Any one would think, to hear you talk, John, that I had done every thing in the world for you, instead of your doing every thing for me."

"That's just the reason," said Mrs. Barker, who was getting tea, and making some short cake in honour of Amy's presence. "Don't you know you almost always like any thing you do some kindness for—if it's only a dumb creature."

“I know that,” replied Amy. “I have often noticed it. There was a man that lived in a little house on Mr. Ryan’s farm, that hated cats,—oh, you never saw any thing like it!—and he kept a great dog on purpose to kill them. At least, he did kill all that came in his way. Will, one day, killed an old cat in the barnyard, and all but one of her kittens. They were under the barn floor, and one kitten crawled away, so that it was saved. In the evening the man went out to the barn, and there the little kitten was, mewing pitifully. It could just get its nose up to a knot-hole in the floor, and there it mewed and mewed; and Hugh went and got a saw, and sawed out the board, and took the little thing out. He thought he would drown it, even then; but it snuggled up in his arms, and looked up at him, purring, as if it thought it had found a friend; so he couldn’t bear to hurt it. He took it home and kept it, and would not let the dog touch it; and he grew as fond of it as if it was a child, almost; and after she grew to be a cat she knew him, for she would sit in the window, and watch for him, and run to meet him the minute he came in sight. The funniest of it was, that the cat and dog became the

closest friends in the world, and always ate and slept together. I have often seen him lying asleep in the sunshine, and the cat between his paws."

"Well done!" said Mrs. Barker. "I thought cats and dogs were natural enemies."

"That is all nonsense!" replied John. "They are only trained into it. A great many dumb creatures would behave themselves very decently, if men would only let them alone."

Mrs. Barker now called them to the tea-table, which was spread with great show, in honour of Amy's visit. The old woman had even produced her three silver spoons—real silver—the last remains of a set given her by her mistress on her marriage. "I suppose you think I might have sold them," she said, in a half apologetic manner; "but, somehow, I couldn't bear to. They was all I had left, and I didn't feel like parting with them."

Amy enjoyed the meal greatly, feeling (though she did not say so) that it was much pleasanter than eating with Miss Susan watching every morsel she put in her mouth, and grumbling if she helped herself twice to any thing. It was very agreeable, too, to find herself a welcome guest, and to meet John's

cordial and friendly glances, and the old woman's smiles, whenever she looked up. When tea was over, she helped Mrs. Barker to wash the dishes and put them away, and then it was time to go home; for she was very anxious not to be behind her time a moment. John would not allow the old woman to urge her to stay, but put on his hat to walk part of the way home with her.

Johnny was waiting at the gate when they came out, and, taking his sister's hand, they three walked along, chatting very pleasantly, till they reached the church that Amy attended. There she bid her friends good-night, with a special charge to Johnny not to forget the road, and took her way home with a light heart. She had nearly reached Mrs. Cummings' gate, when she heard her name called; and, looking in the direction from whence the sound proceeded, she was surprised to see Viney Clarke hanging over a gate on the other side of the street.

"Why, Amy, is that you?" said Viney. "I wonder if you are alive yet! Come here. I want to speak to you."

Amy did not like Viney at all, and she would have passed on; but the desire to hear

from her friends at the farm overcame her, and she went across.

“How do you do, Viney?” said she; “when did you come from home?”

“A few weeks ago,” said Viney. “Where do you live?”

“I live at Mrs. Cummings’, on this street,” said Amy. “How were they at the farm, when you came away?”

“Oh, they are all sick!” said Viney, who never could tell any thing just as it was. “They have all had fevers, and the doctor thought they would die. Such dreadful times as they have had! Mother says it is a judgment on them for their pride and meanness. However, they are all better, but Lizzie.”

“Oh, Viney! She is not dead?” cried Amy, bursting into tears.

“No, she ain’t dead. That is, she wasn’t the last I heard; but the doctor thinks she will go into a decline. She is dreadful thin, and has a shocking cough. All her people have died of consumption, you know,” continued Viney, who had a great talent at administering discomfort.

Amy did not wait to hear any more. She felt as if her heart would break as she thought

that she should probably never see her dear Miss Lizzie again; and she had not succeeded in restraining her tears, when she reached home, and was met by Miss Susan at the kitchen door. Mrs. Cummings was within, washing the tea dishes.

“So that is the way you come home, is it?” said the young lady, tartly. “I don’t think visiting does you much good, I must say. I suppose you are crying because you had to come back to work!”

“I guess you’d cry yourself, Miss Susan, if you heard that your best friends were sick and dying!”

It was such a rare thing for Amy to show any temper, that Miss Susan looked at her astonished.

“Well, I declare!” said she. “You have learned a lesson of impudence! How dare you speak so?”

“Hush, Susan! For shame!” interrupted her mother. “What is the matter, child?”

Amy told her story. Mrs. Cummings sympathized with her, and tried to comfort her by saying she had no doubt Viney exaggerated matters, and praised her for being home in

season, and advised her to say her prayers and go to bed.

As for Miss Susan, if she was at all ashamed of herself, she had not the grace to say so, and she repaid her mother for her reproof, by sulking all the next day.

CHAPTER X.

THE next day was Sunday, and Amy was up betimes, anxious to prove that her visit had done her no harm. She put the parlours in nice order, and then set the table and had breakfast ready before Mrs. Cummings made her appearance. She received some words of praise from that lady, but Miss Susan was far from pleased at being roused so early—it was half-past seven. When breakfast was finally over, the dishes put away, and Mrs. Cummings and Susan had gone to church, Amy took her Question Book and Testament, and sat down on the steps to learn her lesson. She was very much engaged in finding answers to the questions, when the back gate was opened, and Viney Clark put her head within.

“Have your folks gone to meeting, Amy?” she asked; “I am coming to see you, if they are.”

Amy was far from pleased at the interruption, and she was afraid Mrs. Cummings would not like to have any one there while she

was gone; so she determined to give Viney no encouragement to prolong her stay, and asked her what she wanted.

“Oh, nothing!” said Viney,—taking a seat on the steps,—“only to talk a little. Our folks have all gone out and left the baby with me; but I had no notion of being there all alone, so I put him to sleep, and came over here. They are so mean, they make a regular fuss if I go out more than three or four times a week, and on Sunday I must go when they are out, or not at all. How often do you go?”

“I have only been out once since I came here,” answered Amy, “except to market with Mrs. Cummings. Are you not afraid to leave the baby alone?”

“Oh, dear! no! But don’t they let you go out? I would not live with such folks. I suppose they are well off, ain’t they? Come, let’s go over the house! They won’t be home for an hour.”

“I would rather not,” said Amy, “and, Viney, I would rather you would come some time when Mrs. Cummings is at home, if you please.”

“Oh, don’t fret yourself! I shall be home

long before she is; and how is she to know any thing about it, unless you are fool enough to tell her?"

"Besides—I must get my Sunday-school lesson, and I cannot, when you are talking to me."

"I do wonder if you are going to Sunday-school yet—a great girl like you! I'd be ashamed to be seen there. Oh, pshaw! never mind your lesson! I want to see if your parlours are as nice as ours."

Amy steadily refused, however, to let Viney into the house; and she departed, not very well pleased with her reception, and muttering that "she would make her repent of her airs!"—"she would take her down a peg or two yet!"

As soon as she was gone, Amy applied herself to her lesson with all diligence, and soon had it learned. She then set the table for dinner, and dressed herself ready to go out as soon as the ladies should come in. They were rather later than usual, and Amy began to grow impatient, fearing that she should lose the opportunity of seeing John Stark, and meeting Johnny at the church-door. Presently they made their appearance.

“Oh, dear!” said Miss Susan, throwing herself down on the sofa. “Oh, how tired I am! I do wish Mr. Rosenburg would shorten his sermons a little! but, of course, he would not leave out a word for the world. Here, Amy—take my bonnet up-stairs, and bring me down the book I was reading. It is on the bed I believe, or somewhere up-stairs.”

Amy carried up the bonnet, but the book was not to be found.

“Dear me! Can’t you look till you find it? You are dreadfully afraid of a little trouble!”

Amy began to feel very impatient at being kept so long, but she reflected that it was proper for her to try and please her employers; and, after much searching, she found the book, and brought it to Miss Susan. But that was not all.

“I wonder if I brought my bag home from Mrs. Warner’s. Amy, go into the front parlour, and see if it is there anywhere.”

“Don’t keep Amy any longer, my dear Susan. Don’t you know it is high time she was gone to Sunday-school? Run along now, Amy!”

“Ridiculous, mother! Just as if it would

hurt her to wait a minute! But you always think more of her convenience than you do of mine."

"Why, Susan, my child! How can you speak so?"

"Dear me! what did I say? You make such a fuss for the least word. I never can suit you, do what I will."

Amy heard this conversation as she was passing out, and she could not help thinking that it was not street children only that were impudent to their parents. She made all the haste she could, and arrived at Sunday-school just as prayers were over. Johnny was waiting at the gate, but John Stark had been obliged to go home. She led the child into the school-room, and gave him in charge of one of the teachers. He was a little disappointed at not sitting with Amy, but his attention was soon occupied by the sight of so many nicely-dressed children, and by the pictures on the walls of the infant school-room. Miss Compton examined him, and found that he knew the alphabet, and could say some short hymns and Bible verses. Rather surprised at the extent of his acquirements, she asked him who taught him.

“Amy,” said Johnny, proudly. “She taught me every thing.”

“Is Amy Kelly your sister?” asked Miss Compton.

“Yes, ma’am,” said the child.

“I should think she was a very nice girl, indeed, to take so much pains with you. If I give you this card of verses to take home with you, do you think Amy could find time to teach them to you?”

“I don’t know,” said Johnny, doubtfully; —“she lives out now, and I hardly ever see her; but I will ask her.”

“Well,” said Miss Compton, “you can take it at any rate, and see. I am glad you have such a good sister, and I hope you will be very good, and do every thing she tells you.”

Miss Compton now turned her attention to some of the other pupils, leaving Johnny to take care of himself a while. His eyes were caught by a picture on the wall, which he studied with great attention. It represented a man taking some little children in his arms, while others stood round him, looking in his face, or holding to his clothes. Johnny thought it was a beautiful picture, and felt very desirous to know what it was about.

He was just going to ask a pretty little boy next him, when he received a sharp pinch from behind. He turned quickly round to see who had done it; but there was no one near him except a boy who was reading very busily, and Johnny thought it could not be he. He had again become absorbed in his favourite print, when he received another pinch; and, turning more quickly than before, he caught the offender in the act. It was the same boy who had been so much engaged with his book.

“What did you do that for? You’d better let me alone!” said Johnny, regarding him with a threatening countenance.

“Do what?” asked the boy with a grave face. “I didn’t touch you, Paddy.”

“You did—you pinched me!” said Johnny; “and my name is not Paddy, either!”

“Hush, Paddy! Don’t get mad! I guess you pinched yourself, by mistake.”

“I didn’t—you pinched me, and if you was out of doors, I’d thrash you, I would!”

“Say you so!” said his tormentor. “I should like to see you.”

Johnny could have done it easily enough, but he was awed by the place where he found

himself; and so, instead of striking, he began to cry.

Miss Compton's attention was attracted by the noise, and she came to see what the matter was.

"It's that little Irish boy! He keeps disturbing the class, and he says he'll thrash me."

"He pinched me!" sobbed Johnny, "and I won't stay here to be pinched—so!"

"You did pinch him, you know you did!" said a little girl on the seat behind him. "He was as quiet and good as could be, looking at the picture, till you began to pinch him, and call him names."

"And I saw him too, Miss Compton," chimed in another little voice. "He is always teasing some of us, and I wish he did not come here."

Miss Compton made some further inquiries; and, finding that Georgie Howe was really the one to blame, she set him on a seat by himself; and, taking Johnny by the hand, she wiped away his tears and quieted him. Then she explained to him the picture that had interested him so much, and gave him a small coloured card representing the same scene. The glass doors were now opened, and the

children all sang together ; and then there was a prayer, and they all went home.

Amy and Johnny remained at the church for the afternoon service, and Amy employed most of the interval in teaching her brother his hymn, and talking to him about it. He told her what Miss Compton had said about her teaching him ; and Amy promised to ask Mrs. Cummings if he might come once in the week, and let her show him about his lessons. " But be sure, Johnny, you don't tell mother, or she will be coming after me."

Johnny promised to be discreet. " She will never think of asking me where I have been," said he. " She never cares where I am, except she wants me to do something."

" Will you stay to church ?" asked Amy.

" No, I guess not. She might ask where I had been so long. I guess I had better go home."

Amy thought that Johnny might get too tired, as he was altogether unused to sitting still ; so she let him go, after charging him to be in time next Sunday, (a point which he was not likely to forget,) and giving him a multitude of messages for Mrs. Barker and John Stark, in case he should see them. She took

an opportunity, that same afternoon, to tell Mrs. Cummings of Viney's visit, and to ask what she should do if she came again.

"Just as you did to-day," said Mrs. Cummings. "I am glad you have so much sense. How did you know any thing about her?"

"They lived near Mrs. Ryan's," replied Amy; "and I used to see her and the others sometimes, but not often; for Mrs. Ryan did not like them much."

"Well!" said Mrs. Cummings, "if she comes again, and I am here, let me know; and, if you are alone, act just as you did to-day. I hope you are going to turn out a good girl, Amy; but I never judge in a hurry. However, I will say this for you, that you have done very well indeed, so far."

Emboldened by this praise, Amy ventured to prefer her request in regard to Johnny. "He need not come into the house at all, Mrs. Cummings; but if you would just let him come and sit on the back step with me a little while, I should be so glad,—and it would do him so much good."

Mrs. Cummings thought a little, and finally consented, on condition that Amy should be responsible for Johnny's good behaviour, and

engage that he should not touch any thing not belonging to him; which she gladly promised, knowing that she could do so with safety. She tried to show her gratitude during the week, by doing every thing to please both her and Miss Susan, especially the latter, who was so far won by Amy's efforts, that she did not find fault with her more than once a day, and even made her a present of an old muslin frock of her own, which Amy mended and tucked up, and worked over into a very respectable Sunday frock.

She was delighted, the next Sunday, to find her good friend, the boat-builder, waiting, with little Johnny, in the porch, and to hear him say that he liked her minister very much. Johnny was gratified with the news that he was to come the next Wednesday evening, and learn his lesson with Amy; and she had time to assure herself that he could repeat two verses from his card with tolerable exactness. Her own lesson was well learned, and she received a card from Mr. Rosenberg as a reward. Miss Compton, as she passed near the class, stopped to tell her that little Johnny behaved very well, and had his lesson nicely. And, altogether, the day was a happy one.

The next day, when Amy had finished cleaning the kitchen after the washing, and was just going up-stairs to dress herself, Viney put her head in at the door.

“Dear me! Have you just got through washing? I had all my clothes out by two o’clock.”

“So had I,” said Amy; “but I had some other things to do afterwards. Do you want any thing, Viney?”

“No,—only to see you! Oh, what nice peaches!” (Mrs. Cummings had just bought some to preserve, and left them on the kitchen table, while she went up-stairs to change her dress.) “Give me one, can’t you?”

“No,” said Amy. “They are not mine.”

“I didn’t suppose they were; but you can give me one, can’t you? Come, give me that small one; nobody will miss it.”

“Do you suppose I would give you what was not mine? I would as soon take one, and eat it myself!”

“Amy!” called Miss Susan, from the top of the stairs. “Come up here and fasten my dress.”

Amy was in a dilemma. She did not like to keep Miss Susan waiting, and she liked

still less to leave Viney alone with the peaches.

“Will you please wait a minute, Miss Susan?” she asked.

“No. I can’t be kept waiting!”

Amy saw no way but to go; and the moment her back was turned, Viney pocketed two of the peaches, and went off. Susan found something more for Amy to do when the dress was finished, which detained her for some time; and, when she came down, Mrs. Cummings was engaged in paring the fruit.

“Amy,” said she, “some one has taken two of these peaches.”

Amy coloured, comprehending in a moment that she was suspected; and Mrs. Cummings continued:

“I thought you were too honest a girl to take what did not belong to you! Now, don’t attempt to deny it; for I know just how I left them.”

“I know I have not touched them, any way,” said Amy. “Viney Clarke was here, and wanted me to give her one, and I wouldn’t. Perhaps she took them.”

“Well, perhaps she did,” said Mrs. Cummings. “I should not like to find you out in such a trick. But you need not colour and

look so angry, the moment one hints such a thing. That is very foolish !”

Amy thought to herself that it was enough to make any one colour ; but she was wise enough to know that it is much better not to answer at all, unless one can do so with perfect good humour. So she held her peace, and went on with her work.

“I do not see what makes that girl hang about here, I am sure,” said Mrs. Cummings. “I am afraid you have given her some encouragement to come and see you. You know I cannot have people coming about the place. I was rather doubtful whether it was best to let your little brother come here ; but if he does, that is no reason why others should ; and you must understand, once for all, that I won’t have it.”

Mrs. Cummings had worked herself into quite a heat. She was rather out of humour, for she had just been paying some taxes,—a task always particularly trying to her temper. She was vexed, too, at the loss of her peaches ; and, not having much self-command, she vented the whole of her annoyance upon Amy, who felt that it was rather hard to be scolded at for what she could not help.

“I am sure I don’t want her to come here, Mrs. Cummings,” said she. “I never asked her to come, and don’t mean to.”

“Don’t answer me so, Amy! When I speak to you, I won’t have any impertinence from you—not a word! Unless you had asked her, or, at least, talked with her, she would never have come, I am confident.”

Amy now coloured more than ever, and bit her lip to keep from crying. Still she thought she would not do any thing wrong if she could help it.

“Shall I set the table for tea now?” she asked, hoping to change the subject.

“Now, don’t look so like a mad cat, Amy, and don’t go to crying! I cannot bear to see a child show so much of temper. I am afraid your Sunday-school and Bible-reading does not do you much good, if it does not teach you to behave better. Now don’t let me have to speak to you again; and, remember, I will have no impertinence. Yes, you can set the table, if you think you can do it properly.”

Amy felt very uncomfortable indeed. She would have tried to set the matter right, but the more she said the worse it was; so she went into the parlour without answering again. Her

disturbance of mind made her rather less careful than usual, and so it chanced that in passing around the room, she knocked over a very light stand at which Miss Susan was sitting with her work-box, and scattered the contents of the box all about the floor, besides treading upon Miss Susan's foot in her confusion. Now, that young lady was even more "out of sorts" than her mamma; for some company, that was to have made some visits with her, had failed to come; and, under these aggravated circumstances, it was hardly to be expected that she should keep such a temper as her's.

"You little, good-for-nothing vixen! How dare you? You did it on purpose, you know you did. I'll teach you"—and with these words Miss Susan's fair hand inflicted a severe blow on Amy's ear!

Amy's temper now rose as well as Miss Susan's; and, leaving the room, she walked straight into the kitchen, and said in a voice which trembled from passion, "Mrs. Cummings, I will thank you to pay me my wages and let me go. I am not going to stay here to be treated so—to be struck by Miss Susan. I should think a young lady would be ashamed to do such a thing."



“You did it on purpose, you know you did.” p. 236.

Mrs. Cummings stared in amazement, for Amy's temper was so seldom ruffled, that she had almost forgotten that the child could have any.

"What is the matter now?" she asked. "Who has been slapping you?"

"I did," said Miss Susan, who had followed her into the kitchen, "and I'll do it again if she don't behave better. She pushed over the stand on purpose, and scattered the things all over the room—the little, impudent——." We will not repeat the word Miss Susan used, for it was not a very lady-like one.

"I did not do it on purpose, and I am not impudent," answered Amy. "I've seen you knock that very stand over yourself more than once, Miss Susan, and you said it was so unsteady that it was not fit to set any thing on. I am willing to work as hard as I can, and to try and please people, but I won't be treated so."

Mrs. Cummings had begun to be, in secret, a little ashamed of herself, for her treatment of Amy; and she was, moreover, aware that she could not get a girl to supply her place without paying her almost twice as much: so she set herself to pacify the child.

"Come, come, Amy! Don't talk so! Take

time to think about it. You are angry now. Susan should not have struck you, but never mind it. I am surprised at you, Susan! How could you do any thing so unlady-like? What if Miss Compton or her brother had seen you? There, Amy, don't be troubled about it any more. I am sorry Miss Susan was so hasty."

"I was not hasty!" exclaimed Susan. "I'd do so again in a minute! You always make out that I am to blame, mother, you know you do!" and she burst into a violent passion and a flood of tears.

"Susan, hold your peace, and go into the other room this instant!" said her mother, in a severe tone. "There is Mr. West coming in, now. A pretty figure you are to show yourself, to be sure! Go up-stairs and wash your face."

"There is no water there, Miss Susan," said Amy, whose anger, never lasting, always vanished at the first kind word. She got the water, and ran up-stairs, and came down before the door-bell was rung.

"See what a forgiving temper the child has," said Mrs. Cummings. "I am really ashamed, Susan, that you should forget yourself so. There is nothing people (and especially gentlemen) dread so much as a scolding, fretful tem-

per; and you will certainly be caught some day, unless you put more restraint on yourself. Put your collar on straight—you have twisted it half round. You know very well we could not get a girl to do Amy's work for less than a dollar a week; and then, very likely, she would not be half as neat or economical. Tie your shoes, child—there is a clean handkerchief on the ironing-table. There, now you look fit to be seen; and, besides," said Mrs. Cummings, as an after-thought, "you know it is very sinful to get into such fits of passion."

Miss Susan did not get the full benefit of this lesson of morality, for she was already in the parlour, apologizing to Mr. West for having kept him waiting. "She had been engaged in some domestic duties. They had not very good servants, and she could not think of leaving every thing to mamma."

Meantime Mrs. Cummings had been talking to Amy in the kitchen; and Amy, whose conscience began to reproach her for being so angry, was easily induced to go on setting the table, after she had picked up the contents of the pattern-box. Mrs. Cummings was about to send her to the storeroom for some cake, but Amy drew back from the offered key.

“I would rather not, Mrs. Cummings. Something might be wrong, and then it would be laid to me. I will watch the peaches, while you go.”

“Really, Amy, I did not think you were so proud !”

Amy was not quite sure that she was right in being so proud, but still she would not go; and Mrs. Cummings went herself, considering that, after all, it was not unnatural that Amy should feel hurt at being suspected; especially, when she was really careful not to meddle with things. She praised her for setting the table so neatly, and repeated that she must not mind Miss Susan. She was not very well, and had been worried; and, besides, she was naturally hasty—“that had been her disposition from a child.” As if that were any excuse! However, Amy was easily persuaded to give up the idea of going away, at least for the present. She brushed her hair smooth, put on a clean apron, and waited at tea with great propriety; and Miss Susan was compelled to allow, that it would not be very easy to fill her place.

“You must not mind me, Amy. I am always quick as a flash, but I never bear malice.

There is a piece of cake for you, and some sweetmeats."

Amy swallowed her pride, and accepted both the apology and the gift, though she could not help wondering whether Miss Susan would have considered it any excuse, if she had remarked, when the box fell over, that she must not mind it—she was naturally careless, &c.

She ate the sweetmeets, but saved the cake for Johnny. She did her work as neatly as possible, and went to bed, feeling very tired. She did not feel at all satisfied with herself, for she was conscious that she had indulged very improper feelings, and committed a great sin in giving way to her temper as she had done. Amy had not been one-tenth part as well taught as Miss Susan, but she had been too well taught to plead her natural disposition as an excuse for doing wrong.

Her chapter that night gave an account of our Saviour's mock-trial before Herod and Pilate; and, as she read the story of the meekness of the blessed Jesus under the reproaches and blows of his cruel enemies, she felt painfully that she had shown little of the spirit of Christ. She could not help crying, as she remembered how angry she had been; and, kneeling down,

she besought God to forgive her, and to give her more grace, that she might be humble and patient, like her divine Master.

Amy said no more about going away, and Mrs. Cummings treated her about as usual; but things were not quite so comfortable as they had been before. Miss Susan was a good deal ashamed of herself when she came to think the matter over, and she felt vexed at Amy, for having witnessed her ill temper. It is almost always rather difficult to feel right toward people whom we have injured. Mrs. Cummings could not quite get over the affair of the peaches either. She watched Amy closely, and almost unconsciously interpreted many things to her disadvantage.

Thus, when little Johnny came on Wednesday evening to have Amy teach him his lesson, she asked Mrs. Cummings if she might give him his supper, intending herself to go without. Mrs. Cummings told Amy to eat her supper, and gave Johnny a slice of bread and butter herself; but when she came in, through the yard, a little while after and found him eating a piece of cake, she concluded at once that Amy had taken it for him without leave; and, though she said nothing, she was very much displeased.

Amy, however, quite unconscious of the suspicion, took great pleasure in seeing Johnny's enjoyment of his cake, and then in teaching him his hymn, and singing it with him. He was very quick in learning it, and could say all the four verses perfectly before he left. He had seen John Stark, too, and could tell Amy that they were all well there; so she had a pleasant evening, and went to bed quite happy.

Things went on in this way for three or four weeks; and, in that time, Amy went to see John two or three times, always coming home in good spirits and good season. Viney dropped in sometimes, but not often. Once, however, she came when Amy was away, and Mrs. Cummings took the opportunity to question her as to what she knew of the child. Viney was glad of a chance to talk. She was, as we have said, not remarkable for her adherence to truth, and she was not unwilling to revenge herself on Amy, whose steady conscientiousness was very distasteful to her; so she opened her budget without delay.

She described the Ryans as both proud and mean, always anxious to make a figure, and setting up to be a great deal better than their neighbours. She attributed their taking Amy

to their desire of getting work done cheaply, and making a show at small expense; and, to crown all, she more than intimated that Amy had faults which made it impossible for them to keep her, and therefore they had to get rid of her. Mrs. Cummings did not quite believe the story, and yet it made a strong impression upon her, and made her much more watchful than ever of Amy, so that she began to feel very uneasy under her scrutiny.

It happened about this time that Miss Susan, who was never very careful of her affairs, lost two or three common handkerchiefs in a way she could not account for. Amy was sure they had not been put in the wash, and said so; but Miss Susan did not believe her, and decided in her own mind that Amy had either borrowed and lost them, or given them away. She did not say so at once, but hinted it in a way that made Amy very uncomfortable; and she began to think she must look out for another place, when something happened that decided the matter for her.

One morning, she was busy up-stairs putting Miss Susan's room in order, while Mrs. Cummings was occupied about something in the kitchen. Presently there came a tap at the

door, and Mrs. Cummings opened it. An Irish woman, with a very red face, and of an appearance by no means promising, presented herself with the question,—

“If you plaze, ma’am, is there ever a girl here by the name of Amy Kelly?”

“There is such a girl here,” said Mrs. Cummings. “What do you want with her?”

“I want to see her,” said Mistress Kelly;—for it was no other than she. “She’s my own daughter; and a weary time I have had looking for her!”

“Did you not know where she was?” asked Mrs. Cummings, in surprise. “Did she run away?”

“Troth, she did, ma’am, and from an excellent place I had for her. It’s a bad child she is, any way, and has broke my heart time and again with her wicked ways! I’d be glad to see her, ma’am, if ye plaze.”

“Amy! Come here.”

Amy came down, singing as usual. She was struck dumb with astonishment and consternation when she beheld her mother, and stopped short in the doorway.

“Oh, Amy! And is it yourself?” said Mrs. Kelly, in a violent spasm of tenderness.

“And what for would ye be running away, and breaking your poor mother’s heart? I’ve not slept a wink for thinking of you, and the father has turned the place upside down in search of you!”

“But Amy says you turned her out of doors,” observed Mrs. Cummings.

“Not a bit of it, ma’am! It’s just one of her bad ways—slandering her mother. She was saucy to the lady where she lived, and when I went to correct her for it, she ran away. I’ve been trying, ever since, to find her, and shouldn’t have done it now, but for Johnny. I jealoused his knowing, and tried to make him tell me; but the little scamp is a stubborn one, and would not say a word, though I bate him within an inch of his life. So, last time he came over, I followed him, and found out.”

Amy burst into tears at the thought of Johnny’s being beaten for his faithfulness to her.

Mrs. Cummings now went out of the room, leaving them together. As soon as Mrs. Kelly found herself alone with her daughter, she dropped her whining tone at once.

“What do you mane, you little ——,

stealing off and chating your mother out of her wages? Do you think I'm going to have you working, and all dressed-up as fine as a pay-cock, and me without a dacent gown to me back? What are ye fit for, if not to work for your mother? What wages do you get? Say!"

"Three shillings a week," said Amy.

"It's mighty little, any way; and what do you do with it all? How much do they owe you?"

"Not any thing," said Amy. "I hadn't decent clothes when I came here, and I had to lay out all I earned in things to wear. If you had wanted me to work for you, you needn't have beaten me, and turned me out in the street. I'm sure I am willing to do all I can for you, if you'll only let me be in peace, mother."

"So you think yourself too good to have any thing to do with me, do you, miss? I'll soon teach you better than that. That's what you learned out there, in the country, no doubt; but you won't learn any more there. There was a man in from there, the other day, talking in Leary's grocery; and he said the old man and his daughter was both dead with the fever. And God knows where they be

now—the poor heretics ! And there's another of your ways—trying to make a heretic of Johnny. But I'll soon cure him of that ; and, if you want him to have a whole bone in his skin, you'll lave him alone."

Amy heard no more of the unfeeling announcement of the death of her benefactors. She sat down upon the stairs, and gave way to an agony of grief.

"Now, I'll just tell you the whole of it. Either you give me your wages every week, or else you don't stay here, and you shall go somewhere where I get the good of you ! Do you hear ?"

But Amy gave no signs of hearing ; and Mrs. Kelly addressed herself to Mrs. Cummings, who re-entered the kitchen.

"I was saying, ma'am, that I should have to take Amy's wages to myself for the present. So you will pay the money to me instead of to her, if you plaze. I'm loth to take it from her, bad as she has treated me ; but the father is sick this three weeks, and I'm not well myself, having to be up and down with him all night. We have not had a mouthful in the house this morning."

Well as she knew her mother's habits of

lying, Amy stared in surprise, for Johnny had told her that her father had plenty to do.— She dared not say a word, however; and her mother continued:

“I’d be glad if ye could let me have a little money now, ma’am, to get some bread and a spoonful of tay, as I go home; for there’s not a thing in the house, and he lying sick, and the child crying from starvation.”

“There are only two weeks’ wages due Amy,” said Mrs. Cummings. “She has spent all the rest for clothes as she went along.”

“More’s the shame for her, then!” replied her mother. “She’d have a plenty, if she didn’t pawn them!”

“Pawned them! For what?” asked Mrs. Cummings.

“Well, then, ma’am, I’m sorry to say it of my own child; but it’s a drop she takes, now and then, when she can do it unbeknown. May be she hasn’t done it since she came here; and then she is fond of sweet things—candy and cake, and the like.”

“Mother! how dare you say so?” said Amy, in honest indignation. “You know it is not true—not a word of it. You know the reason I came away from Leary’s was because

they wanted to make me drunk. I wonder you dare tell such stories !”

“ You see, ma’am ! A nice girl, to tell her own mother she lies. But I’ll thank you for the money, if ye plaze. I’m glad so good and smart a lady as yourself has her in hand ; for, maybe, you’ll make something of her. She won’t impose upon you, any way ; for we can see that you are quick-sighted enough not to let her come round you. But I’d advise you to watch her close, and keep things out of her way.”

Mrs. Cummings paid her the money, and she departed, leaving Amy in a state of agitation more easily imagined than described. She could not help feeling angry at her mother for having slandered her and beaten Johnny ; but her indignation was almost swallowed up in her grief. She never thought of doubting what her mother had told her about the Ryans. She had been expecting some such news ever since Viney had told her of their sickness ; but now it came upon her like a thunderbolt. She had many a time said herself that she should never see them again in this world, and she thought she had given up all expectation of it ; but the agony she now felt showed her that it

was not so. That hope had lived through all. But it was dead now. She should never see them again in this world: and heaven seemed so far off! Poor Amy!

“Come, come! Leave off crying, Amy,” said Mrs. Cummings, not very mildly. “It is bad enough to have such a fuss, without your keeping the whole house disturbed afterwards. You ought to have told me that you ran away from your mother, and that Johnny came here without leave. What good do you think it will do him to learn Bible lessons, while you are teaching him all the time to disobey his parents?”

Mrs. Cummings was really a weak-minded woman, and far from clear-sighted—though Mrs. Kelly had complimented her on possessing that faculty. She was always governed by the last person who talked with her; and when she once took up a prejudice, as she had against Amy, every thing helped to strengthen it. She might have seen that Mrs. Kelly had been drinking herself, if she had observed her closely; but what she had said about Amy took strong possession of her mind, and at once confirmed all her previous impressions with regard to the child. Perhaps if she had

understood what Mrs. Kelly had told Amy in regard to the Ryans, she might have been more compassionate; but that had escaped her, and she concluded that she was crying because she had been found out.

Amy wiped away her tears, and went upstairs to her room, to find comfort where she had so often found it before in seasons of trial. At first, she could only kneel by her bedside and weep; but, by degrees, she became calmer, and was able to pray. She begged that she might be able to say, "God's will be done!"—that she might have grace so to pass through this troublesome world as to meet her friends in heaven, and that her heart might now be there. She thanked God that her dear friends had departed this life in his faith and fear. She prayed Him to forgive her enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and to turn their hearts, and to give her a conscience void of offence toward God and man. She arose somewhat comforted, though still very sad; and, after she had bathed her face, she returned to her work.

The day seemed very long. Mrs. Cummings was any thing but kind to her, and she felt that she was an object of suspicion and dislike

to both her and her daughter. Every thing was more carefully locked up than ever. Miss Susan's eye followed every motion, and she longed for night, that she might be alone with her own thoughts and decide what to do. The day came to an end at last, as all days must, whether bright or dark; and she was just thinking of fastening up the back gate, when it was opened, and a little white head and dirty face, stained with tears, made their appearance.

"Amy!" called Johnny's soft voice. "Can I see you a minute?"

"Oh, Johnny! is it you? Yes. Come in. How I have wanted to see you! Do you know that mother has been here?"

"Don't I know it?" said Johnny, sitting down on the steps, and laying his weary head on Amy's shoulder. "I wanted to tell you that I did not tell her where you was. I was so afraid you would think I did, that I run away, and came over on purpose."

"I know you didn't! She told me how she beat you to make you tell. Don't you think, Johnny, she told Mrs. Cummings that I ran away from her, and pawned all my clothes for drink! And she bid her look out that I did

not steal from her! And Mrs. Cummings believes it; for, she says, no mother would say such a thing, if was not true."

"I wish I was a big man!" said Johnny, shutting his teeth, and clenching his little fist. "I'd teach her!"

"Oh, hush, Johnny! You must not talk so. We must pray for them who injure us."

"I can't!" said Johnny, crying. "Nobody can't pray for them that does so. If it was only me, it wouldn't be so hard; but I can't forgive her for using you so!"

"Oh, yes, you can! It says we must in the Bible; and God would not tell us to do any thing that we couldn't do. Now, Johnny, promise me that you will try!"

"Well, I will!" said Johnny. "But what are you going to do, Amy? You'll never stay here now?"

"I suppose they won't want me to," answered Amy. "I must try and find a place somewhere else."

"I wish I could help you!" said Johnny, his tears flowing afresh at the picture Amy had drawn. "But I am afraid I can't do much!"

"Nothing, but to pray for me! That will

help me a great deal; and if you see John Stark, tell him that, perhaps, I shall have to come and stay there a few days, and ask him if I may."

Mrs. Cummings now made her appearance at the kitchen door.

"So you are here again, Johnny? Did your mother say you might come?"

Johnny was beginning to take a pride in telling the truth, and he answered, "No, ma'am!"

"Then, why do you come? I am sorry that you are such a disobedient little brat, and that Amy has taught you not to mind your mother. You may go home now. I cannot have such boys about me,—so don't come again."

Johnny was strongly tempted to give Mrs. Cummings what he would have called a piece of his mind; but Amy's eye and the pressure of her hand on his arm restrained him. She kissed him good-night; told him to be at Sunday-school next Sunday, if he could, and tell Miss Compton why he had not his lesson; and then, fastening the gate after him, followed Mrs. Cummings into the house, and went to bed, after she had lighted the lamp in the par-

lour, and received a reproof from Miss Susan for looking sullen!

As she was setting the table next morning, Miss Susan came down in a great flutter.

“Mother! have you seen my worked handkerchief—the one cousin Robert gave me? I can’t find it anywhere!”

“What did you do with it last night?” asked the mother.

“I left it on the parlour-table, with my fan,” answered Miss Susan. “I am sure I brought it home, because I remember particularly folding it up, and laying it down,—and now it is gone!”

“Perhaps you put it in the wash, Miss Susan,” said Amy.

“Nonsense, child! As if I should trust your clumsy fingers to wash it! That’s a likely story!”

The colour came to Amy’s face; but she restrained herself, and answered gently:

“It might have got among the rest by accident. I’ll look them over and see.”

“Mind your own concerns, Amy!” said Mrs. Cummings, sharply, “and bring in the breakfast. I will look for the handkerchief myself.”

Amy did as she was told; and the moment she had left the room, Miss Susan exclaimed:

“I’ll venture any thing she has got it! Did you see how she coloured when I spoke to her? and how anxious she was to account for its being gone? I dare say she has taken it, and given it to her little brother to sell, and I shall never see it again.”

“Perhaps it is in the house somewhere,” said Mrs. Cummings. “I would not give it up yet. You may have put it somewhere else.”

“Do you suppose I don’t know, mother? I tell you I remember all about it; and, besides, I have looked everywhere, and can’t find it.”

“I will look over Amy’s things, while she is at breakfast,” said Mrs. Cummings. “It may be among them. I hardly think she can have disposed of it yet. To be sure, that child was here last night,—and she went out to the gate with him. It will be too bad if it is gone. But, come, eat your breakfast; and don’t cry about it yet. Perhaps it will turn up in the course of the day.”

Mrs. Cummings called Amy to breakfast, and then set herself to tumbling over the things in Amy’s bureau-drawer, but she found nothing

of the handkerchief, or other stolen property. She then searched the house from top to bottom, without success, and was obliged to conclude that it was gone. She came back to the parlour to take counsel with Susan as to what was to be done, and they decided to call in Amy, and force her to tell what she had done with it.

Amy came, not knowing wherefore she was called, and she was thunderstruck when Mrs. Cummings said to her :

“Now, Amy, you must tell what you have done with that handkerchief. If you will confess the whole, I will let you off; but, if you don’t, I will have you sent to jail.”

Amy stood a moment to collect her thoughts, and, in that moment, she had prayed to God for strength, and received an answer to her prayer. Then she said, gently and simply :

“I don’t know any thing about it, Mrs. Cummings. I have not seen it since Miss Cummings took it in her hand to go out last evening.”

“How dare you say so?” said Mrs. Cummings, growing angry at once, and not the less, that her conscience was by no means easy as to the course she was taking. “Didn’t

your own mother as good as tell me that you would steal? Tell me, this instant, what you did with it?"

"I have done nothing with it, Mrs. Cummings. I never touched what was not my own since I came into this house."

"Didn't you take those peaches?"

"And the handkerchiefs I lost?" said Miss Susan.

"No, ma'am."

Mrs. Cummings took her by the arm, and shook her violently.

"If you don't confess this moment, I will have you sent to jail. I know it is not among your things, for I looked. I suppose you gave it to your brother, to sell for you, or to give to that man that you think so much of. No doubt it will keep him and his company in whisky for some time. Answer me this moment!"

But Amy was inflexibly silent under their threats. She did not know that Mrs. Cummings had no power to do what she threatened,—namely, to have her sent to jail; but she knew that she was innocent in the sight of God, and she felt perfect confidence that he would watch over her, and bring her

safely out of her trouble. She leaned against the back of a large chair, with her eyes fixed on the carpet, and gave no sign of yielding.

Miss Susan now resorted to coaxing.

“Come, Amy. Tell me what you have done with it, and you shall not be punished. I am sure we have been very kind to you since you came here, and done every thing for you; and why won't you tell what you have done with my handkerchief?”

Amy lifted up her eyes from the carpet, and answered :

“Miss Susan! Your mother has been very kind to me. But if she had been ten times more kind, I cannot tell what is not true to please her. I have never seen the handkerchief since I saw it in your hands, and I have never taken so much as a pin since I came into this house.” Then she dropped her eyes, and was silent again.

“If you tell me that again, I will send for a police officer. A nice girl you are to go to Sunday-school, and then come home and steal! I shall take care that your teacher knows what a little thief she has in her class. I'll tell her all about it, you may depend!”

“Mrs. Cummings,” said Amy, in a voice which made both her accusers quail, “if you tell my teacher that I am a thief, you will tell a wicked lie, and God will bring you into judgment for it. He knows I am innocent, and He will take care of me. I am not afraid of any thing you may do. You may slander me, if you please; but you can never injure me, as long as God takes care of me!”

“Well, mother!” said Miss Susan, after a moment’s pause. “Give her her rags, and let her go. She is a regular thief, and no one wants her in the house! Get your things, Amy, and begone!”

“Will you please get them yourself, or else go with me?” asked Amy. “I don’t wish to give you a chance to say I took any thing else.”

Mrs. Cummings went up-stairs, collected Amy’s things together, and brought them down. Amy quietly looked them over, to see that they were all there; went into the kitchen, and brought her Testament and library book, and a Prayer-book that Mr. Rosenburg had given her, and put them in her bundle; put on

her bonnet and shawl; and, turning round as she reached the door, said:

“Mrs. Cummings and Miss Susan, I forgive you, and I hope God will forgive you for what you have done. I am a poor girl, with no one to take my part, whatever you may do; but I believe God will take care of me, as he has done before!”

She then left the room, and went out at the kitchen-door, shutting that and the gate after her.

The two who were left in the parlour sat in silence for a few minutes. They did not feel very comfortable. Mrs. Cummings well knew that she had not a shadow of proof that Amy had been guilty of theft. She knew Susan's careless habits, and, when she grew cool, she could not but see that it was very possible she had left the handkerchief somewhere, or lost it in the street. She felt that she had not done as she would be done by, or treated Amy as she would have wished a child of her own to be used. Miss Susan had something of the same feeling, but in a less degree. It was seldom she was betrayed into feeling deeply for any one but herself.

“I am almost sorry we were so hasty!” said

Mrs. Cummings, at last. "You might have left it somewhere, after all, Susan!"

"Pshaw! I am just as sure as that I live that I left it on the parlour table. I dare say she will find some other place."

"And we could not have the old woman coming about!" remarked her mother. "On the whole, I am not sorry she's gone!"

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs. Barker and John were just sitting down to dinner, when the latter exclaimed, "Why, here comes Amy, bag and baggage!"—and they hurried to the door to meet her.

"What in the world brings you here this time of day, Amy?" asked Mrs. Barker, as she came in, hot and weary from walking in the sun; "you have not left your place, have you?"

"Yes," said Amy. "They have turned me away!" and quite overcome, she burst into tears.

"There, don't talk to her now!" said John, considerately. "She is fairly beat out, poor thing! Come, take off your bonnet and get some dinner, and then you will feel better. Here is some cool water to wash your face, and dinner is all ready, though there isn't much of it. There, sit down! That's right!"

Amy was very grateful for John's kindness, though she found it impossible to eat; which he observing, forbore to urge her, but occupied

himself in talking to Mrs. Barker, in order that she might have time to recover her composure. When dinner was over, he did not hurry away as usual, but remained till the table was cleared away; then he said—

“Come, now, Amy, let us hear all about it. Tell me the whole story from first to last.”

Amy told it as well as she could, concealing nothing. She was interrupted by many expressions of pity and indignation from the old woman, but John said nothing, though his lips were compressed and his sharp eyes flashed. When she had finished, he arose, and took his hat.

“Where are you going?” asked Amy, anxiously.

“I am going to see this woman,” said John with emphasis, “and make her take back every word she has said about you. I will have them know that you are not without friends, whatever they may think! A fine thing, to be sure, to accuse you of stealing, without any proof! But I’ll give them a lesson!”

“No, pray don’t!” said Amy, anxiously. “At least, not to-day. It would do more harm than good!”

“And let them tell every one that you are a thief? That would be a pretty story! Sup-

pose they tell your teacher and Mr. Rosenberg, and then they won't let you go to Sunday-school any more !”

“Yes, they will, I know !” said Amy. “One day some one went to him, and told him that two children in the school were very bad boys, and told lies and stole, and wanted him to send them away, but he wouldn't. ‘So much the more need of having them here,’ said he. ‘I wish we could get all the liars and thieves in the city to come.’ Besides, I am sure they will be sorry themselves, when they think about it. I would rather you would not go, John.”

“I don't understand why,” said Mrs. Barker. “I should think you would be glad to have them brought to account for such conduct.”

“No, I don't,” said Amy. “I was rather angry at first, but I am only sorry now. You know the Bible says, ‘Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you.’ I dare say I can get a place somewhere.”

“And if you can't, you can stay here,” said John. “We can rub along somehow.”

“After all,” said Amy, “it was not so very strange. You know mother told them I would steal and drink, too; and Mrs. Cummings said no one would tell such a thing of her own

child, unless it was true. I guess she doesn't know much of some people."

"I guess she don't know much about any thing!" said John. "But how did she find out where you were?"

"She followed Johnny when he came to say his lesson;"—and then Amy told the story of Johnny's constancy with tears of mingled pride and sorrow.

"Seems to me, Amy, you are always getting into scrapes by doing things for other people! That was the trouble at Leary's. You'll have to leave off that business, and do as I do."

"Yes, to be sure! Do as you do!" repeated Amy, laughing through her tears. "You never put yourself out of the way to help any one, did you? You never did for me, and you don't for your mother-in-law!"

"That reminds me!" said John, starting up a second time. "I must go down there right off! The old lady was not very well last night. Do you stay here till I come back, and don't fret yourself about that Cummings woman. We'll set the matter right one of these days. I rather think, on the whole, that your way was best about not going over there to blow them up a little."

Amy laughed, and John departed, but soon returned looking disturbed and anxious.

“You must come, Mrs. Barker, and help me take care of her! She is very sick, and, I am afraid, won’t last long!”

But no—Mrs. Barker would not go. “I can’t go where I shall have the cholera!” said she. “I should be sure to catch it, and I couldn’t do any good, either! You had better let her be taken to the hospital, hadn’t you? I would!”

“Well, if you don’t want to go, you needn’t! I only hope you will not be left alone, when your own time comes!”

He was going out again, when Amy appeared, with her bonnet on, and avowed her intention of accompanying him.

“I can help you to rub her, and stay with her while you go for the doctor. Come, don’t let us lose a minute!”

“And what am I to do, if I should have the cholera here alone?” said Mrs. Barker, dolefully. John was just going out, but he turned and said, “Oh, you can be sent to the hospital, you know.”

“It is curious now, isn’t it?” he said to Amy, as they walked rapidly along. “After all that

has been done for that old woman, by me and other people, she has not a bit of a feeling for anybody else in trouble. She is always jealous of the old lady, and she can't bear to have me give a penny to any one. I can't see how any one can feel so, myself!"

"Nor I," said Amy; "but I know they do. There were the Clarkes that lived near Mr. Ryan's. Mrs. Ryan did every thing for them, and yet it seemed as if they couldn't bear her; and when I went there, they took a regular spite at me—and then!" she exclaimed—"I never thought of that! I should not wonder one bit, if Viney Clarke had told Mrs. Cummings some stories about me. She lives close by there, and used to come in sometimes; and I know she don't like it of me, because I would not let her go over the house, when Mrs. Cummings was gone."

"Like as not!" said John. "But here we are. You had better let me go in first, and don't be frightened. I don't think there is much danger, even if it is the cholera."

"I am not afraid," said Amy, quietly. She could not help thinking that she should be glad to die with the cholera, but the thought was gone almost before she was aware of it. She

prayed for grace to do whatever might be necessary, as she stood on the steps of the little brown house, waiting for John to come out. It was not long before he made his appearance.

“She is just as I left her!” said he. “Come in, and don’t be afraid! She just lies still and breathes softly! Do you sit by her, while I go for the doctor!”

John was off in a moment, and Amy sat down by the bedside. The room was very clean and neat, and the curtains and sheets white as snow, as were the clothes the old lady had on. She had evidently not been up since she retired the night before, for her dress—a neat calico wrapper—hung on a chair at the foot of the bed; and her shoes and knit cotton stockings were carefully disposed of beside it. A large Bible, and a few religious books—some of them quite old and worn, and others nearly new—were lying upon a pair of hanging shelves which Amy remembered to have seen John making not long before. She took down one of the new volumes, and found the name of Dr. H. pasted into it, as she remembered to have seen it in a book he had lent Mrs. Cummings.

“Miss Susan says that Dr. H. feels so aristocratic!” she said. “I wonder what she

would say to his coming here and lending books to old Mrs. Steel! She would think it as strange as that Miss Compton should teach little ragged children in the infant school-room, and let little Biddy Mack play with her beautiful gold chain to keep her quiet!"

The room was rather fantastically tricked out with pictures, bits of bright coloured paper, and broken china, like a child's play-house: but a vine grew round the windows, the glass was clear, and the floor white, and Amy thought it looked very pleasant. The old woman lay quite still, with her hands crossed on her breast, and one would have almost thought she was dead, but for her soft breathing.

It seemed a very long time that John was away. The house stood in a retired place, where there was no passing of carriages and no sound of voices. A solitary bird was singing merrily in a cage outside the windows, and a cat was purring in the arm-chair: the clock ticked loud and monotonously, and there was a sound of hammers and axes from the distant boat-yard, but so far away, that it seemed to make the silence deeper. Amy took a bunch of peacocks' feathers that hung over the mantel-piece, and busied herself in keeping the flies

from the old woman's face, who lay always in the same position with her eyes closed. Her thoughts grew solemn and composed.

She reviewed the events of her past life : her miserable infancy : the time when she went out begging, and when Miss Fairbarn began to notice and teach her : her first Sunday-school lessons : then Mr. Ryan coming after her with his little carriage, and the first night at the farm, where all was so strange and new. Jane's clever black face and kindly voice, Mrs. Ryan's mild authority and patient gentleness, Miss Lizzie's beauty and kindness—all passed before her, with the whole career of her happy life at the farm.

Then she went on to the agony of parting with those dear ones, whom she thought she should never see again : the horrors of the place her wretched mother called "*home*:" her service at the Leary's : her first meeting with John Stark, and the dark, dark night, when she sped through wind and storm to drop, like a tired bird, at his friendly door.

Then she thought of Mrs. Cummings—how kind she had been to her at first, and how cruel at last : she did not feel the least anger toward her now, nor even any anxiety to be cleared from suspicion herself. Her thoughts were busy

with higher things. She thought of the eternal world—so far, so near,—to which the still form before her was drawing closer with every breath, and of the gates of pearl, which would soon open to receive her who should reach the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation, to hear the Saviour say, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” She thought of those she loved, already in glory, and singing the song of the Lamb, and felt as if they might be very near her. She sat wrapped in these musings till John returned, bringing a physician with him—a dark grave man, with a gentle eye, and a voice that was gentler still.

“Has there been any change, Amy?” asked John, in a low voice.

“No,” replied Amy, in the same tone. “She has not moved at all since you went away.”

“Is your mother very old?” asked the doctor of John, as he took the relaxed hand gently in his, and felt the pulse—but there was not much to feel.

“I should say she is, sir. I don’t know exactly how old; but, judging from the ages of her children, I should say she was past seventy. But she has always been strong in body, though her mind has been feeble many years.”

“Are you her oldest son? You said children—I thought you were her only son.”

“Only her son-in-law, sir! I married her youngest daughter. None of her own children ever took any care of her after she lost her mind; and, when they moved away after my wife died, they said she might go to the Poor-house—but I wouldn’t allow that!”

“And so you took care of her, did you?”

John was silent, but Amy answered, “Yes, sir, always: and he always does all he can for every one!”

The doctor’s eye turned on her approvingly. —“Your daughter?”

“No, sir: only a little girl that I befriended, and that came over to help take care of mother.”

“You seem to have a way of befriending people!”

He turned to the bed, examined the patient once more, and then said in his kind, grave tone, “My good friend, I can do nothing for her! There is no disease in the case: it is only the natural breaking down of the vital powers, which comes before death. She may rally again, but probably not—and I presume her death will be perfectly easy. I need not tell

you to take good care of yourself, and your friend here. It is a time of great mortality.”

“Now, Amy,” said John, after he had seen the doctor away, and had stood silent at the door for some minutes, “you may do just as you like, go home to the old woman, or stay and help me take care of mother. She may die in the night, and then I should want help. Which will you do ?”

“I would rather stay. I shall be company for you, if I cannot do much. I would much rather stay, if you are willing.”

“You won’t be afraid to sit here another half hour or so, while I go home and tell Mrs. Barker, will you ?”

“Oh, no !” said Amy : “but pray don’t hurry yourself !”

“I’ll be careful !”

He put on his hat, and departed. Amy, again left alone, began to consider what she could do. She thought Mr. Stark ought to have some refreshments ; so she put on the kettle, and cut some bread and butter. She found the pantry well stored, and in the best order, and got ready a comfortable meal.

All this time the old woman lay in just the same posture, though Amy thought her breath-

ing grew rather fainter. At last John came, and she persuaded him to eat something, and drink a cup of tea. It was a solemn and silent meal!

When she had put away the dishes, Amy made a little more fire, for the nights were now quite cool; and the two sat down for a long watch. Presently, John took the well-worn Bible from the shelf, and put it into her hand. Amy turned over the leaves, and read how a certain man, named Lazarus of Bethany was sick, and died; and how he was raised from the dead, by One who wept over his grave. There were no words spoken, but those from the sacred volume—and there needed none. The clock in the corner struck nine—ten—eleven—twelve—at long intervals: the bird now and then stirred on his perch: the old cat took his station on John's knee, and sat winking, and gazing at the fire; the candle burned down and was renewed.

But, about one, there was a change. The old pilgrim on the bed moved restlessly, and raised a hand to her head. John and Amy both rose, and went to the bedside.

“Mother,” said John, bending over her, “do you want any thing?”

“Is that you, John?” said the old woman,

in a voice which was tremulous, but clear. "I am just going, my son!" John turned his head aside a moment, and then said—"Is there any thing you would like to have done?"

"Nothing!" said the old woman. "I shall never want any thing more!" Her eye fell on Amy. "Who is that?"

"Only a good little girl that came to help me take care of you."

"I've given you much trouble, John, but God will reward you! I'm going to Him soon—fast—fast!" Her voice faltered into indistinct murmurs, and she was silent for some moments. Then she raised herself up, and said in a clear, firm voice—"In Him is no darkness at all!" These were her last words, and her tired spirit was resting in heaven almost before they were fully uttered.

John closed her eyes, and crossed her withered hands upon her breast. He stood a few moments gazing at the thin features, and then sitting down by the bed's head, he buried his face with his hands. Amy saw the tears fall.

"It's a happy thing for her, Amy," said he, presently, in a broken voice—"but it'll be a great loss to me! I hain't nothing left now, Amy—nothing at all! There ain't a human

creature to care for me, but you, Amy !” and the sobbing of the boat-builder shook his manly frame as if it had been that of a delicate woman.

Amy was awed by his grief, and she dared not intrude upon it, or offer any other token of sympathy than just to stand by his side. He composed himself by degrees.

“I don’t know as I shall be able to do much for you, but, any way, I’ll do what I can. You must help put things to rights here, for we shall have to bury her pretty soon, I expect. Do you think Mr. Rosenburg would come over ?”

“I am sure he would !” said Amy, wiping her eyes. “He always goes everywhere, if he is wanted ! I know he would come gladly !”

When all that was necessary was done, John arranged a comfortable place for her on the lounge, and made her lie down and rest a little. She soon fell asleep, and when she awoke it was broad daylight. She started up quickly, washed her face and hands at the pump by the kitchen door, and then busied herself in preparing some breakfast. John ate very little, and soon took measures to procure a decent coffin, and then went over after Mr. Rosenburg.

Upon telling his errand, Mr. R. said :

“And so the old soul is gone to her rest !

She has had a sad time ; not so sad though, as if she had not had you to take care of her—no ! It must be a great consolation to you that you were able to make her old age so comfortable. Did you have help enough about taking care of her ? Was she sick long ? Why did not you send for me ?”

“ There was no time, sir ; she was only conscious just at the last, and then she spoke as plainly as ever I heard her. Amy Kelly helped me to do what was necessary, and she is there now. You know Amy, sir, that girl that goes——”

“ Yes—I know her—yes—I am ready now, John—oh, yes, I know Amy very well. But I thought she lived at Mrs. Cummings.”

“ She came away from there yesterday, sir. I don’t think they used her very well, either. There was a worked handkerchief lost, and they tried to make Amy confess to stealing it, and when she wouldn’t, they turned her away. In fact, I don’t think they were ever very good to her from the first, from the little I can find out : but she never complains of any thing.”

“ I thought her a very good girl, from what I saw of her,” said the minister. “ She learns her lessons very well, her teacher tells me, and

takes a great deal of pains with her little brother. I went down to see the boy, but did not do much good. The mother had been drinking, and treated me very rudely.”

“I almost wonder you dared go there, sir!” answered John. “They are the worst people in town, and live in the worst place. But it is a fact, ministers go into all sorts of places. But if you will excuse my saying so, sir, I think you had better let me go with you next time!”

“Thank you, thank you, John! But I am afraid you would be too—too anxious to take my part. There is no use in resisting a drunken person. Oh, I shall go again! I am not going to give it up so, and as for your kind offer, I’ll see about it!”

They now arrived at the house, where Amy had all things in readiness to receive them. Two or three neighbours dropped in: Mr. Rosenberg performed the burial service, and spoke a few words, noticing the piety of the deceased, and exhorting those present to follow her example. Then the coffin was carried out, and put in the hearse, and John, Amy, and the minister got into the carriage. They carried the body to the cemetery, and there, under a tree in which the birds were singing, they com-

mitted it to the grave: "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

On the way back from the cemetery, Mr. Rosenburg took occasion to ask Amy what she intended to do.

"I shall get another place to work, sir, as soon as I can. I thought perhaps John might like me to help him a day or two, about taking care of his mother-in-law's things, and then I shall go out again."

"Quite right! Quite right!" answered Mr. Rosenburg; "but I hope you will not go so far away, that you cannot go to church and Sunday-school."

"I shall try to go to church, at any rate," said Amy. "I don't know how I shall get a place, I am sure. Of course, people will ask me why I came away from my last place, and then I shall have to tell them. It seems to me, if I were a lady, and had persons living with me, I should be very careful how I accused them of taking things unless I knew for certain."

"It is always best to be very cautious," remarked the minister. "I hope, Amy, that, if

you get a good place, as I presume you will, you will be very careful to give no occasion for suspicion. Many girls—mind I don't say that you do—but many girls do have a habit of meddling with little matters about the house, and giving away things out of the kitchen and store-room. Probably they excuse themselves by thinking that they do it for charity, but that is no excuse in the sight of God. You have no more right to give away what is not your own than you have to use it yourself. I know it is a great temptation to a girl who has poor relations almost suffering from hunger, to see an abundance of every thing within her reach; but remember that, though it is right to deny yourself for the sake of others, it is sinful to give away so much as a crumb of bread belonging to your employer."

"I know it, sir, and I never did. Sometimes I used to save part of my own supper for Johnny, but I never gave him a crumb of any thing else. Poor little fellow, I don't know what is to become of him, I am sure!" she continued, sighing.

"Oh, you must not be discouraged! Some way will be opened for you, I doubt not; and, meantime, you must do as well as you can, and

not forget to ask God's help and blessing, for all depends upon that."

They now arrived at home, and Mr. Rosenberg was about to take his leave when John with considerable hesitation asked to speak with him a few minutes. The minister assented, and led the way into the house. Amy took the bird-cage out into the porch, and, shutting the door, busied herself in cleaning it, and providing for the wants of its occupant, and then in petting and comforting the poor old cat.

Mr. Rosenberg took a seat, and John, standing by the window, and turning his straw hat round and round in his hand, at last managed to say—

"I was thinking, sir, if you see no objection, I should like to join your church! I have been thinking about it some time; but, somehow, I couldn't make up my mind to mention it."

Mr. Rosenberg was a good deal surprised, as well as pleased. "I am much gratified to hear you say so, John! How long have you been thinking of it?"

"Well, sir,—a good while. You see, my wife was a godly woman, and it was always a great grief of mind to her that I was not of the same way of thinking. I used to go to church with

her most every Sunday, more to please her than any thing else, I confess. My own folks were pious people, too, and I was well brought up, though I've been wicked enough since, especially since my wife died, but I got sick and tired of such a life. And since Amy came, she has set me to thinking more and more of what my poor wife used to say sometimes, and now I've come to the conclusion, that the only way for me is just to come right out square, and profess to be what I mean to be—and that's a Christian. I expect some will laugh at me for it, but I don't know as that's any matter."

Mr. Rosenburg and the boat-builder had a very interesting conversation, and it was at last decided that John should carry out his intention at the first opportunity.

"There's another thing, sir, that I'll just mention," said John. "I don't know but you'll think I might do more for Amy, now that my hands are in a manner free; but I've been considering about it, and, on the whole, I think she had better go to a place, if she can get a good one. You see she is growing up very fast—almost a woman in appearance—and it will be better for her to have a place and do for herself, than to be dependent on me."

“I see! I see! You show a good sense about it. We shall make you a very useful man among us yet. I think we shall have you teaching in Sunday-school before long.”

“I would rather be in a class myself!” said John, smiling. “I don’t know enough to teach children their a b c’s, hardly.”

“Well, well—we shall see. Come and see me as soon as you can, and we will have a talk with Dr. H. He is out of town now, but will return before Sunday. Good-bye! Good-bye, Amy.”

John and Amy finished what they had to do, and then went home, when Mrs. Barker received them rather ungraciously at first. She thought it very hard, that they should leave “her to take care of herself so long, when,” as she said, “she might have had the cholera as well as not, and not a soul near to do for her! But it was just like John, always running after new friends, while she might work her fingers to the bone, and get no thanks for it!”

So she ran on, till Amy began to get out of patience, remembering all that John had done for her, and she wondered that he bore it so patiently. But John was accustomed to Mrs. Barker’s grumbling, and minded it no more than he did

the noise of the saws and hammers, when he was at work in the boat-yard. If she grew quite intolerable, he would sometimes give utterance to a threat of breaking up house-keeping, and going to California,—a threat which never failed to silence her complaints and make her as amiable as possible for several days.

It was toward nine o'clock, and Amy was just preparing for bed, when there was a hasty tap at the door, which was repeated two or three times, before any one had time to open it.

"Is Amy Kelly stopping here?" asked a voice, as soon as the door was open.

"Yes," said John. "What of her?"

"Her little brother is very sick with the cholera," said the messenger,—whom Amy recognised as a playmate of Johnny's. "The old man was buried this morning, and her mother is just dying; and they want her to come right away!"

Amy was partly undressed, but she appeared with her bonnet on, almost before the speaker had finished. John stopped her, as she was going out—

"I'm most afraid to have you go. You are most worn out now. Hadn't you better stay, and let me"——

“Oh, no,” said Amy. “I must see Johnny. I can’t stay away from him!”

“Down into that awful hole!” exclaimed Mrs. Barker, who had not quite recovered from her ill-temper,—“and among all that dirt! Well! I’ll tell you one thing, Amy. If you go, you may just stay. You don’t come back here to give us all the plague!”

“That’ll be as I say, I guess, Mrs. Barker,” said John, coolly. “It wouldn’t be amiss for you to remember that you are not head woman here. If you don’t like your company, you are welcome to clear out any time. But, if you stay,—I don’t want to say any more.”

Mrs. Barker shrank into herself, like a snail into its shell, at these words, which were very severe indeed, to come from John. She was even too much frightened to object to his going with Amy; and so let them depart without saying a word, consoling herself by giving way to a regular storm of crying and scolding, as soon as she was sure John was out of hearing.

They made all the haste possible, and soon arrived at the miserable hole—for it was worthy of no other name—where Amy’s mother had lived. It was a basement room, or rather cellar, almost entirely under ground,

about twelve feet square, and with only one little window near the top of the room. There was a bedstead in one corner of the room, on which lay the wretched woman in the last agonies of death; while Johnny was extended on the floor with no bed and no covering, but the ragged remains of an old patchwork quilt. The walls and ceiling were incrustated with dirt and mildewed by damp, while the floor, rotten and broken, showed the dull gleam of stagnant water underneath, which reflected the rays of the flickering candle. There were no remnants of any provisions about the place, but a small tin pail, containing about a pint of whisky, stood on the table. No one was in the room; but a few half-drunken women were clustered round the door, looking in.

Amy threw off her bonnet, and kneeled down by Johnny, on the floor, trying by every tender caress to rouse his attention. At last he opened his eyes. A gleam of pleasure shot over his face at the sight of his sister; and, though he was too weak to speak, he pressed her hand, and showed clearly that he knew her. John, who was well acquainted with the disease, saw, at a glance, that the mother was past all earthly help, and could not last many

minutes; and, after raising her head and trying to make her position more comfortable, he gave his whole attention to Johnny,—using such remedies as his experience suggested. In a few minutes he began to revive a little, and, after an hour or two, was able to speak in a low tone of voice.

“Don’t talk, Johnny,” said his friend. “You will tire yourself, and that is bad for you. There’s the doctor, I guess!” (Some one with a careful step approached.) “Sure enough! Dr. G. himself. I didn’t expect to see you here, sir! It’s a dreadful place!”

“I go to all sorts of places,” said Dr. G., in his measured tones. “You seem to have your hands full now-a-days, Stark! Who is sick here?”

“The woman on the bed and this child. I expect she is past help!”

“Past help, indeed,” said the doctor; “for she is dead!”

Amy started up and went to her side.

“Poor mother!” she said. “How dreadful to die so!”

“Don’t think of that, Amy! You did all you could for her.”

The doctor looked at her with surprise, as

she closed the eyes and kissed the forehead of the poor creature.

“Is that her mother!” he asked, in a half-whisper. “She does not look as if she belonged to such people!”

“She is her daughter, sure enough! She has been away from them, however, for a year-and-a-half, and has got pretty much civilized. The very last thing the woman did, was to get this girl’s wages away from her; and, I suppose, that was the cause of her death, for they have been drunk ever since. I hope the child may be saved!”

The doctor examined him, prescribed the proper remedies, and then left, promising to come again, or send some one.

John did all in his power for Johnny; but his efforts appeared to be unavailing; for, though the little fellow revived at first, he sank again directly. He spoke to the little boy who had gone after Amy and the doctor, and gave him his little picture of Christ blessing the children.

“I wish you’d go to Sunday-school, Tommy. You’d like it so much!”

“They won’t let me!” said Tommy, crying. “I want to go, and they won’t let me!”

“Don’t cry, Tommy. You’ll disturb John-

ny!" whispered John. "I'll try and get them to let you go; but don't make a noise."

Tommy was silent, but the tears fell fast as he gazed at the pale face of the dying child, now fast passing away from this world.

Johnny lay quite silent for some time; then he made a movement with his lips, as if he were trying to speak. Amy put her face close to his, and distinguished the word "sing." She understood his desire, and commenced one of the hymns they had been accustomed to sing in Sunday-school. Johnny listened for a while, with Amy's hand clasped in his; but by degrees his little cold fingers grew colder, and relaxed their grasp,—his eyes closed,—his head sank back upon the pillow,—and when Amy looked at him, she saw that he breathed no more. Poor little Johnny had seen the last of earth! He had passed away with his sister's song!

The drops fell fast from the strong man's eyes as he kneeled by the side of the dead body. But Amy did not shed a single tear. She was stunned by the greatness of her grief. She had become perfectly bound up in Johnny since her return to the city, and had concentrated on him all that fulness of affection which had no other natural outlet. For him she had

thought, and prayed, and worked, and denied herself,—and in all her dreams of the future (for even Amy sometimes had day-dreams!) Johnny had borne a part. And now that he was gone, she felt that she had, indeed, no more to live for, and she longed to lie down and die beside him. John spoke to her, caressed her, tried to win her to tears,—but all in vain. She sat like a statue by the side of the lifeless body, appearing hardly more alive than it.

“John! Let me sit by him till he is buried, won’t you?”

John was unwilling at first; but she begged so hard, that he, at last, gave up the point, and allowed her to remain, while he went for coffins, and did whatever was necessary to prepare for the burial.

When Johnny was placed in his last bed, Amy took off her clean white apron and folded it around him, smoothed his curly hair, and cut off a lock for herself. Then she kissed him once more. The coffin lid was closed, and she was left alone in the world. Alone,—but for the faithful friend who had been so kind to her in her trouble, and that God who is the God of the fatherless, and wills not that one of his little ones should perish!

CHAPTER XII.

WE will now return for a short time to the farm, and the interesting group there, from whom we have been so long separated. Amy had been taken away from her happy home about the second week in June. It was now the middle of October, and not a word had ever been heard from her, except a report that she had died of cholera, not very long after her return to the city. All the family had given up the idea of seeing the child again, except Lizzie, who could not persuade herself to relinquish all hope.

Lizzie had not entirely recovered from the fever which had seized her soon after Amy left, but was still delicate and feeble, and her mother sometimes feared lest she should sink into a decline. Mr. Ryan had apparently recovered entirely, and was as well as ever, though he stooped a little, and his hair had grown more gray. Aunt Rachel had gone West to spend the winter, and recruit after her fatigues, and, in her own mind, Lizzie was not

very sorry; for though she felt very grateful to her aunt for her faithful care, and was careful to show that she felt so, yet she could not help feeling, too, that she was harder to get along with than ever. She seemed to feel now, that she was provided with an excuse, and even a justification for any amount of caprice, ill humour and low spirits; and, as Jane said, "Miss Rachel kept the family in hot water from one week's end to another." Therefore, though no one said so, every one felt it to be a great relief, when she accepted an invitation to pass some months with a friend in Wisconsin.

Mr. Ryan was returning from the village one day, when he overtook his neighbour Mr. Clarke, and perceiving that he looked rather tired, asked him if he would not ride. Mr. Clarke accepted the invitation, and took his seat by the farmer's side.

"Desp'rate warm, for the season," said Mr. Clarke.

"It is warm," said Mr. Ryan, "and you seem to have had quite a walk."

"Well, I have! The fact is, I've been into the city to see my girl, that's working out there, and missed the stage, so I had to walk home. I'm tired enough, I tell you."

“I should think as much,” remarked Mr. Ryan. “How does Viney like it there?”

“Oh, pretty well, though the folks are ’mazing proud! They won’t have her eat at the table with them, and once, when somebody came to see her, and rung at the front door, the lady sent them round to the kitchen, and told Viney she had too much company! If I was Viney, I wouldn’t stay there a minute,—and so I told her.”

“I think she had better not leave for that, if she is well off in other respects,” said Mr. Ryan. “She might not do so well again.”

“Oh, she don’t mean to!” returned Clarke. “She says they give her good wages, and let her go when she likes, when her work is done—and she says that little Irish girl that used to live with you—Amy you called her, didn’t you?—lives close by with some people by the name of Cummings. Viney said they wasn’t rich, but tried to pass for that—now, if there’s any thing I despise——”

“What street did they live in?” asked Mr. Ryan, interrupting him.

“I am sure I don’t know. I never can remember the names of the streets—it is as much as I can do to think of my own. But she isn’t

there now. Viney said she got into some trouble with 'em, and had to go away."

"What sort of trouble?"

"Oh, she stole a handkerchief, they said, or something, and they turned her away. She used to steal when she lived with you, didn't she?"

"Never!" said Mr. Ryan. "I never knew her touch any thing that did not belong to her but once, and that was when she first came. Do you know how long it is, since she left there?"

"No, I don't. But if you want a girl, you can get another easier than you can find her. There's my Philly, worth any three of her, would jump at the chance."

"I wish you had made some careful inquiries about our Amy," said Mr. Ryan—not heeding the hint that Clarke threw out;—"but it is something to get even so much of a clue as you have given. I must follow it up at once, and, Mr. Clarke," he continued, with emphasis, "you will oblige me by not saying a word about this to any one, not even your wife. Do you hear?"

"I hear!" answered Clarke. "You needn't be so particular, Squire. I shan't say a word

about it. But you won't really go to the trouble of hunting her up?" he said, delaying a moment, as Mr. Ryan stopped the wagon to let him get off. Mr. Ryan did not think it necessary to answer, and bade him good evening.

"Put Charley to the rockaway, early in the morning, Hugh. I shall go into town, and, perhaps, be gone all day. I suppose you can do without me."

"I s'pose so," said Hugh. "Dyson talked of coming up to look at them colts, though."

"He must come again, then. I must go at any rate."

"Just as you say," said Hugh, who was a man of few words, "t'aint nothing to me."

Mr. Ryan requested his wife to have breakfast ready early, as he was going to the city on important business, which would occupy the whole day. Contrary to his usual custom, he did not tell her what that business was; for he was by no means certain that he should succeed. He left them early next morning, and drove into town, revolving in his mind the best way of finding Mrs. Cummings, and he finally concluded to inquire at some of the stores where she would be likely to deal, and where he himself was well known. He accordingly entered

one of the most fashionable shops in town. There were a good many people in the store, and he walked quite to the further end to find the proprietor.

“How are you to-day, Mr. Ryan?” said Mr. Smith, cordially shaking hands with him. “You look quite yourself again. And what will you look at, in our line, to-day?”

“At nothing this morning,” replied Mr. Ryan. “I wanted to ask you if you can tell me where a widow lady by the name of Cummings lives?”

“A widow—with one daughter—oh, yes! You must mean Mrs. David Cummings.”

A very tastefully-dressed young lady, who was buying something at a counter near by, looked up at these words.

“She has one daughter, I know, but I cannot tell any more about her, except that a child in whom I am interested lately lived there.”

“It must be Mrs. David Cummings,—I think.—Miss Compton,” said Mr. Smith, addressing the young lady with great deference, “do you know where the Cummingses live now?”

“They live at Number 9, Grand street,” said Miss Compton. Then addressing Mr.

Ryan, she said, modestly—"May I ask, sir, if the child in question is named Amy Kelly?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the farmer: "do you know any thing of her?"

"I know she was there not long ago," replied Miss Compton, "but I have not seen her lately. I was quite interested in her and her little brother, but I have lost sight of them for a few weeks. She seemed a nice child, I thought."

"I am very anxious to find her," said Mr. Ryan. "She lived in my family a year, but I was then obliged to give her up to her parents again, and have never been able to hear any thing of her till yesterday. Perhaps you can direct me where to find this lady. My name is Ryan. I knew your father quite well, if, as I suppose, you are General Compton's daughter. We were boys at school together, and though I have seen him only two or three times since, I saw the likeness in a moment."

Miss Compton was not at all displeased at being told that she resembled her father, and she was interested by Mr. Ryan's anxiety for Amy.

"I know Mrs. Cummings well, and will go.

there with you, if you wish it. I have no doubt that we shall be able to hear something of her."

"MOTHER," said Miss Susan, peeping out between the blinds, "there is a rockaway stopping here, and some one getting out! It is Miss Compton and a gentleman with her. Who can it be, I wonder?"

Mrs. Cummings, peeping out in her turn, said, "And I am sure the carriage does not belong about here. Go and brush your hair, and come down as soon as you can. It may be one of Miss Compton's friends from up the river."

Mrs. Cummings opened the door, and ushered them into the parlour with great politeness and cordiality.

Miss Compton introduced the gentleman, and while Mrs. Cummings was trying to think where she had heard the name before, she went on to say—"Mr. Ryan is desirous to make some inquiries about Amy, the girl that lived with you last summer, Mrs. Cummings."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Cummings, appearing a little confused. "She is not here now. I got rid of her several weeks ago."

“May I ask why?” said Mr. Ryan.

“Oh, she did not answer my purpose: she was very bad tempered, and had quite too many of her friends hanging about her. I found it would not do at all.”

“I heard something about her stealing a handkerchief,” said Mr. Ryan: “was there any truth in that story?”

“Why, no, not exactly,” answered Mrs. Cummings, directing a significant look at her daughter. “That was a mistake, and I was rather sorry for it. Susan found afterward, that she had put the handkerchief in her pocket, and it had slipped down between the lining and the outside of her dress. I really thought at the time that Amy had taken it, and tried to make her confess it, but she was as obstinate as possible, and very impertinent upon going away.”

“But I suppose you made some reparation, when you found out your mistake,” said Mr. Ryan.

“Why, no—it was too late: she had been gone a week then.”

“But did you make no inquiries after her?”

“No, indeed!” said Miss Cummings. “We had something else to do besides running after

her. If she did not take that, I dare say she did other things. People in the city have more important matters to attend to, than hunting up Irish girls; haven't they, Miss Compton?"

"I cannot say, Miss Susan," returned that lady. "I think, if I had made such a mistake, I should not rest until I had set it right. But, Mr. Ryan, I think, as we have failed here, we will apply to Mr. Rosenberg, the assistant minister of Christ church, and superintendent of the Sunday-school. He may tell us something about her," and with these words, Miss Compton took her leave, followed by Mr. Ryan.

"Well, Susan!" exclaimed her mother as soon as they were gone, "you are in a pretty fix now!"

"I don't care!" said Miss Susan, evidently much alarmed. "If Arabella Compton chooses to make such a fool of herself, I don't! So! I dare say she will tell her brother about it, and Dr. H. and every one. It is all your fault—taking the girl to begin with," &c.

But we will leave this unhappy young lady and her mother to comfort each other, while we follow Mr. Ryan. Miss Compton gave him the minister's address and then left him, ex-

pressing a hope that he would be successful, and asking him to let her know the result, which he promised to do. He found Mr. Rosenberg engaged in writing, and slightly impatient at being interrupted. He laid aside his pen, however, and listened with great interest, as Mr. Ryan made known his errand.

“I think I can put you on the right track,” said he. “I know the girl very well, and though I cannot say where she is now, I can introduce you to one who is likely to know—a member of my church, who has befriended her in her troubles—and they have been neither few nor small, poor girl! But Amy heard that you were dead. She will be quite unprepared to see you. Poor thing! she has lost her mother and her little brother by the cholera—a great blow to her. I mean the loss of little Johnny. And what do you mean to do, in case you find her?”

“I shall take her home with me,” replied the farmer. “I have always intended to have her back if she were alive. If you will give me this man’s address, sir, I will find him out.”

“Perhaps you will take me with you,” said the minister. “It will be about John’s dinner-time, and we shall be likely to find him at home. If you will allow me, I will ride over

with you, for I am very much interested in the girl myself, and shall be glad to see her made happy."

"I shall be very glad of your company," replied Mr. Ryan—and they were soon on their way. Mr. Rosenburg was right in his conjecture that they should find John at home. He was just sitting down to dinner with Mrs. Barker, but arose in considerable surprise as he saw two gentlemen get out of the carriage, and went to the door to meet them. Mr. Rosenburg shook hands in his usual cordial manner, and then introduced Mr. Ryan, saying, "This gentleman is anxious to find Amy Kelly. You have often heard her speak of Mr. Ryan, haven't you?"

"Yes, often," said John. "I am very glad to see you, sir. Amy will be surprised enough, for she heard you were dead some time ago; and that, with the loss of her little brother, has pretty much overcome her. She does not seem like herself at all, and has not, since the child died, though I understand they are very much pleased with her where she lives, as far as work goes. I am afraid it's rather a hard place for her, though she never complains!"

"Not in words!" said Mrs. Barker. "But

she is as thin as a shad, and has a pain in her side all the time. I don't believe she's long to live."

"We shall try to cure her when we get her into the country again," replied the farmer. "But how long has she been at this place, and where is it?"

"It is up on this street, about half a mile from here:—almost in the country, in fact. She has been there, going on three weeks. Were you calculating to take her home with you?"

"Oh, yes! I shall take her back at once."

"Well, sir, it's all right, I suppose," said John, drawing a long breath. "Indeed, I shall be glad to have her go, on her own account, though I shall miss her very much. I never took to any child in my life as I have to her, though I was always fond of children, too, and it's curious, but they are always fond of me, though you wouldn't think so to look at me."

Mr. Ryan thought he should, as he observed the honest, open expression of the kind boat-builder.

"I am very much obliged to you for your kindness to Amy," said he. "No doubt the poor child wanted friends badly enough. I believe she was hardly off my mind a moment,

when I was sick in the summer. If you will give me the direction now, I will go and find her, for I have not much time to spare."

John gave it, and then added, "Perhaps you will call here on your way back, sir. I shall be at home this afternoon, and should like to bid Amy good-bye."

Mr. Ryan took his leave, and Mr. Rosenburg returned to his unfinished sermon.

Mr. Ryan drove up the street till he came to the place John had designated—a pretty new house, with green blinds down to the floor of the piazza in front, and some little attempts at flower beds bordered with clam shells before the door. It was some time before he could gain admittance, but at last steps were heard approaching, and a voice called through the keyhole,

"You must go round to the back door. We can't open this."

He went round accordingly, and was met at the kitchen door by a fat, good-natured looking woman, carrying a baby in her arms, while two or three other little children hung to her gown.

"Walk in—walk in, sir," said she. "We haven't got our front door fixed yet, and so we have to bring every one round. Was you wanting to see Mr. Crain?"

“No, thank you,” said Mr. Ryan, taking a seat, and only wondering how such a fat woman could get along in such a small kitchen. “I wished to inquire about a girl by the name of Amy Kelly, that I understood was living here.”

“Dear me, I hope you are not going to take her away. I shall be lost without her. She is the best creature, but for one thing—— May I ask what you want of her?”

“Certainly, ma’am, but excuse me—you said but for one thing: what is that?”

“She is so low-spirited,” answered Mrs. Crain, trotting the baby on her knee. “I never saw any thing like her to work, for her age, and she gets along with children a great deal better than I do, in fact; but she hardly ever smiles, and I haven’t heard her laugh since she came here. To be sure, it is no wonder after losing all her friends in the cholera time, and I should never think of finding fault with her to her face; but, at the same time, I could wish it was different!”

“But she gives satisfaction in other respects?”

“Yes, indeed! And as for telling the truth—why, when she came here, if you will believe it, when I asked her why she left her last place,

she said right out, ‘They turned her away because they thought she stole a handkerchief.’ I could hardly believe my own ears, but Mr. Crain says, ‘Take her!’ says he—‘she’s of the right sort!’ and so she is. But I hope you don’t mean to get her away from me!”

“I am afraid I must have her!” said the farmer, smiling. “Perhaps you have heard her tell of Mr. Ryan’s, where she lived in the country!”

“I have!” said the oldest child. “Are you Mr. Ryan?”

“Yes! Do you think you can spare her?”

The little girl hesitated: “May I come to see her sometimes?”

“Why, Martha, I’m shocked, child! You will excuse her, sir, won’t you? It is because she takes so to Amy that she is so forward.”

“Oh, certainly: we shall be very glad to see you, Martha. But where is Amy all this time?”

“Here she comes!” said Mrs. Crain, looking out. “I sent her down town of an errand, partly to give her a walk, and get her away from the children. One can’t be hard on such young girls, you know!”

Mrs. Crain did not look as if she could be hard on any thing, unless it were chairs, and

hooks and eyes. Mr. Ryan had time to observe Amy before she reached the house, and he thought he should hardly have known her. She had grown tall and very thin, and her fresh colour was all gone. She stooped a little, and moved languidly, as if it were hard work for her to walk. She passed the carriage without appearing to notice it, and entered the house, before Mr. Ryan could quite make up his mind what to do. She stood for a moment gazing at him in a kind of stupefaction.

“Don’t you know me, Amy?” asked Mr. Ryan. She made one step forward, but her strength and sight failed her, and she would have fallen if Mr. Ryan had not caught her in his arms!

“I wonder what keeps father so late!” said Lizzie, going to the window to look out once more. “Did he tell you what he was going for, mother?”

“No,” said Mrs. Ryan, “though he said he might be late. I wish he would come, I am sure, for the evenings are cold and damp, and I do not think it is exactly prudent!”

A few moments brought the carriage in sight.

“Here he is,” exclaimed Lizzie, “and some one with him! Who can it be?” She was hastening to the door. Mr. Ryan entered, leading Amy by the hand.

“Here, wife, I have brought you a present! I was not certain that I should be able to get it, and so I did not mention it beforehand.” But before the words were spoken, Amy was in Mrs. Ryan’s arms, while Lizzie exclaimed, “I knew she would come back—I felt sure of it all the time.”

There were happy hearts around the family altar that night, and when Amy took possession of her old room she felt almost as if she had never left it. All her trouble and sorrow seemed like a dream. It was all over now. No one could take her away again. Johnny—dear Johnny was gone—but then was he not safe in heaven, and she should surely meet him again,—and her cup of happiness was full.

We have now followed our young friend through all her troubles and trials, and brought her safe to her early home, where we will leave her for the present.

It only remains for us to give some account of the other personages of our story.

John Stark was very much cast down at

parting with Amy, and was not heard to whistle for a week afterward ! But, as she came to see him the first time she was in town, and he went out to the farm between Christmas and New Year, he gradually recovered his spirits. He became a teacher in Sunday-school—"in spite of himself," he said—and gathered a class from the very neighbourhood where Johnny Kelly died, among whom was little Tommy, the friend and playmate of the dead boy. Mrs. Barker is grumbling away her life in about the same state of agreeable discontent. She quarrels with John, on an average, three times a year, and threatens to go to the poor-house, upon which John politely asks, "what time of day he shall have the pleasure of sending a wagon for her accommodation"—and this settles the matter for that time. Mrs. Cummings and her daughter live on, in much the same style, but they have never found another girl to supply Amy's place.

The main facts of this little story are all true, and such as have come under the writer's own observation. If it should make any Sunday-school boy or girl feel more interest in the poor children who go round begging in the wet and cold; with no one to care for them, or teach

them to love the God who made them and the Saviour who died for them, one purpose of the author will be answered. She hopes, too; that some kind-hearted family, who have abundant means and a good country home, may think whether they cannot make room and find work for a little boy or girl out of the city, and train them up to be happy and useful, instead of becoming miserable vagabonds, useless to the world, and breeding a moral and physical pestilence wherever numbers of them are brought together.





